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20



72

• ON THE COVER

## Country homes

- 20 • Hampshire cottage Dee Puddy's love affair with wood sings out from every beam of her vintage-filled country home
  - 30 • Herefordshire village house Sensitive restoration, inside and out, has made an eyesore in a medieval village ancient history!
  - 38 • West Sussex hayloft Zingy accents and soft neutrals combine to thrilling effect
  - 46 • Gloucestershire barn conversion The owners of this prize-winning home put heart and soul into its reinvention
- PLUS** Get-the-look ideas for every home

## Interiors & inspiration

- 8 • September The things we can't live without
- 13 Home notes
- 56 • Harvest chic Hold a late-summer party surrounded by prairie pattern and earthy shades
- 66 • Pickle and preserve What every kitchen should have for making the most of the harvest
- 95 The Country Decorator How to store your books in style

## Creative crafts

- 72 Holiday memories The good times will still roll with our ideas for displaying your best snaps

## Home improvements

- 83 • Projects, plans & dreams Open-plan kitchens, washstands, kitchen extractors »



126

66



100



## Seasonal food

### 17 Food notes

#### 115 •Celebrate the harvest

Cook mouthwatering dishes with the best the season has to offer

## Lifestyle

### 18 •Out & about notes

### 78 My kind of country

Best-selling romantic fiction author Freya North loves her rural idyll in Hertfordshire

### 109 10 ways to make life lovely

Happy thoughts and ideas for fashion, eco, travel and more

### 126 My country business

Chloe Shearing and Harriet Maxwell pooled their talents and twin passions for antiques to open a vintage shop in East Sussex

### 146 My favourite view

•Elizabeth, Lady Ashcombe of Sudeley loves the view across the koi carp pond to the castle

• ON THE COVER

## Gardens

### 14 Garden notes

#### 100 •Understated elegance

Barbara Stockitt, sister of rose man David Austin, has created a contemporary garden of restrained elegance in Wiltshire

## Just for you

### 54 Subscribe to Country Homes & Interiors

#### 77 •Save 20% at Garden Trading on practical yet beautiful homeware

#### 113 Plant offer Order buddleia, star jasmine and lavatera and get 48 FREE lavender plants

#### 114 Travel & wine offer Book escorted city breaks to Paris and Bruges, and buy a case of wine with FREE fizz and flutes

## Regulars

### 133 Shopping directory All the contact details and websites featured in this issue



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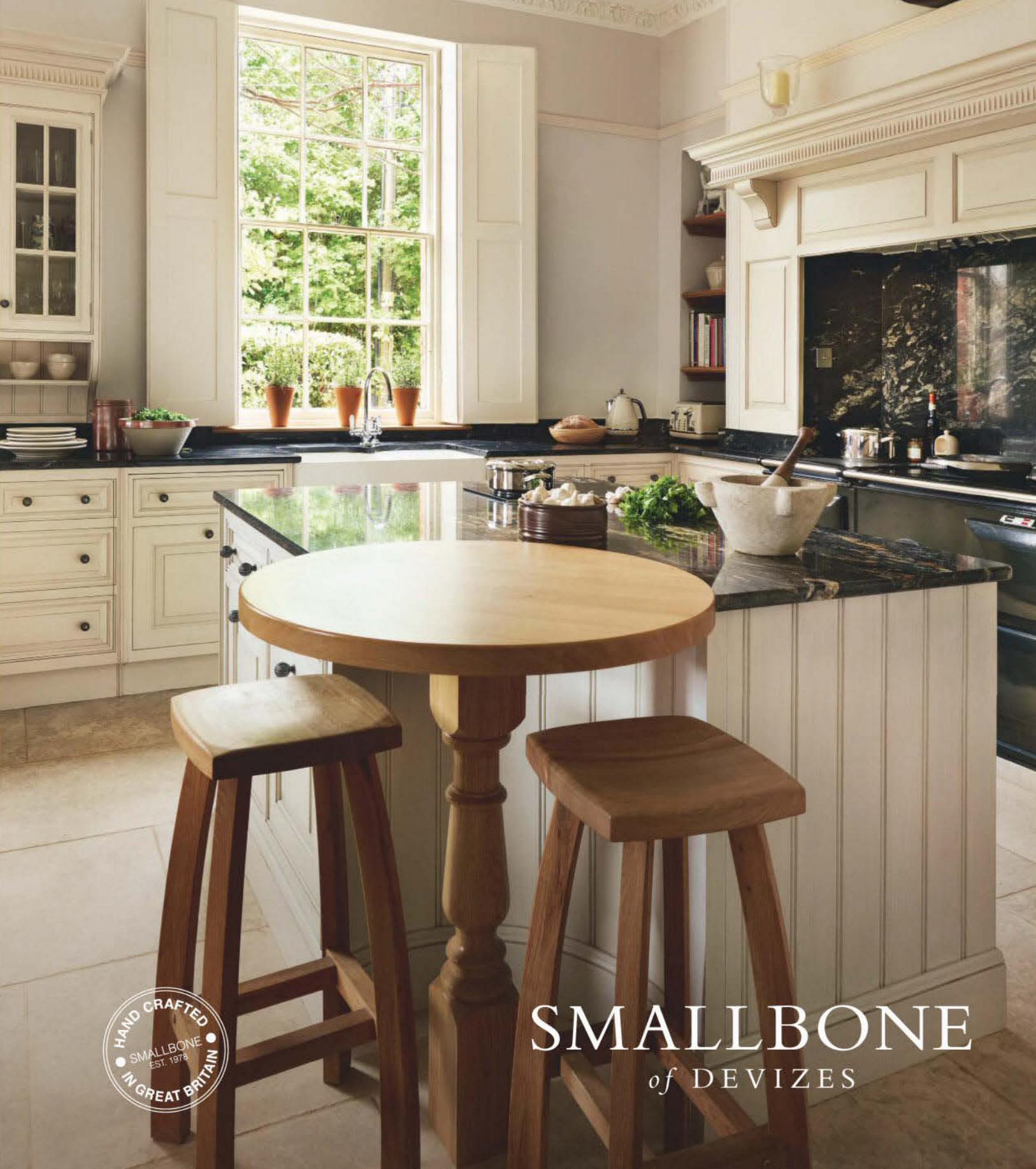
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# COUNTRY HOMES & INTERIORS

Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU  
**Telephone** 020 3148 5000 **Email** [countryhomes@timeinc.com](mailto:countryhomes@timeinc.com)

## Editor

Rhoda Parry

## Deputy Editor

Jane Akers 020 3148 7313

## Creative Director

Emma Williams 020 3148 7184

## Houses Editor

Vivienne Ayers 020 3148 7194

## Acting Shopping Editor

Holly Phillips 020 3148 7195

## Style Writer

Tara King 020 3148 7196

## Editorial Assistant

Columba Colivet 020 3148 7190

## Contributing Editor

Sara Bird (Style)

## Chief Sub Editor

Anne Esden 020 3148 7188

## Senior Sub Editors

Ruth Farnsworth 020 3148 7189;

Marian McNamara 020 3148 7192; Susan Shepherd 020 3148 7187

## Art Editor

Meredith Davies 020 3148 7186

## Designer

Stephanie Allingham 020 3148 7898

## Editorial Production Manager

Nicola Tillman 020 3148 7891

## Art Production Designer

Chris Saggers 020 3148 7896

## Marketing

**Marketing Manager** Alison Watson 020 3148 7685

## Publishing

**Managing Director** Fiona Dent 020 3148 5651

**PA to Managing Director** Lizzie Shepperson 020 3148 5651

**Publishing Director** Yvonne Ramsden 020 3148 7311

**Assistant to Publishing Director** Vera Purbrick 020 3148 7311

**Publisher** Belinda Cooper 020 3148 7666

**Head of Client Partnerships** Alex Russell 020 3148 7570

## Production

**Group Production Manager** Steve Twort 020 3148 5439

**Production Manager** Alan Taylor 020 3148 5441

**Issue Planner/Production Controller** Nicholas Liermann 020 3148 3719

**Digital Producer** Andrew Howe 020 3148 3366

## Circulation

**Circulation Manager** Paul Burden 020 3148 3454

## Advertising

**Commercial Director** Joanne O'Hara 020 3148 7642

**PA to Commercial Director** Lucie Gillespie 020 3148 7641

**Advertisement and London Sales Manager** Ruth Roscorla 020 3148 7639

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**Subscriptions Marketing Manager** Diane Hornby 020 3148 6295

**Creative Media Director** Matt Downs 020 3148 3681

**Projects Director** Hannah Spice 020 3148 3623

**Creative Media Manager** Sue Valentine 020 3148 7630

**Insert Sales Canopy Media** Lindsay Martin 0845 544 1857

**Assistant Syndication Manager** Efi Mandrides 020 3148 5485

## Regional Advertising

**Regional Sales Director** Katrina Hutchison 0161 601 3720

**Group Head (Inserts)** Amanda Dean 0161 601 3725



## Things I've seen, done and loved this month...

September is the high point of summer, I always think. Hot colours and dry textures predominate in our gardens and the surrounding landscape, as sassy dahlias shoot up, fruit and veg swell, and arid yellow cornfields wait patiently to be cut by local farmers. To celebrate this time of plenty and pleasure, 'Harvest chic' became our raison d'être when planning this issue. Take inspiration from the latest prairie motifs and harvest hues to create a home filled with modern rustic style (page 56); shop for the best pickling and preserving buys so you can stock up your store cupboard (page 66); and find the seasonal recipes you need to serve a menu of rich pleasures to friends and family (page 115). Also, meet the owners of beautiful houses, gardens and local businesses who 'love country life' and wouldn't have it any other way!

*Rhoda X*

PS... We're such big fans of Garden Trading that we've arranged for a special 20% discount – just for you!

See page 77 for its range of  
lovely products.



# September

Things we can't live without...

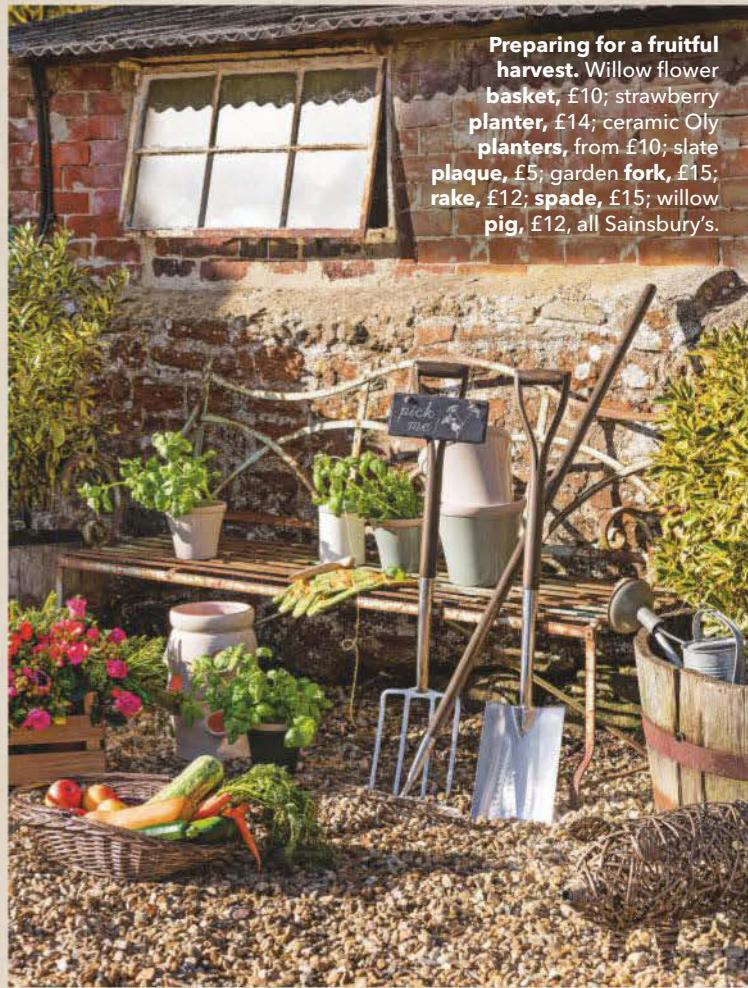
Dahlias in  
jewel colours  
displayed in an  
old enamel jug

Vintage enamel jug, similar from  
Decorative Country Living. **Fabric**,  
similar Suffolk Check, col Sage,  
£24.50 m, Ian Mankin.



### Laying the table with rustic table linens

Lara linen **napkins**, col Rust, £5.49 each; Lara **tablecloth**, col Iron, from £34.99, both Linen Me.



**Preparing for a fruitful harvest.** Willow flower basket, £10; strawberry planter, £14; ceramic Oly planters, from £10; slate plaque, £5; garden fork, £15; rake, £12; spade, £15; willow pig, £12, all Sainsbury's.



### PINTEREST

For more things we can't live without, follow us at [countryhomesmag](#)

**Festival-style pull-ons. Wellies**, from left: Molly Welly, £36.95; Welly Print, £39.95; Field Welly Gloss, £39.95, all Joules.



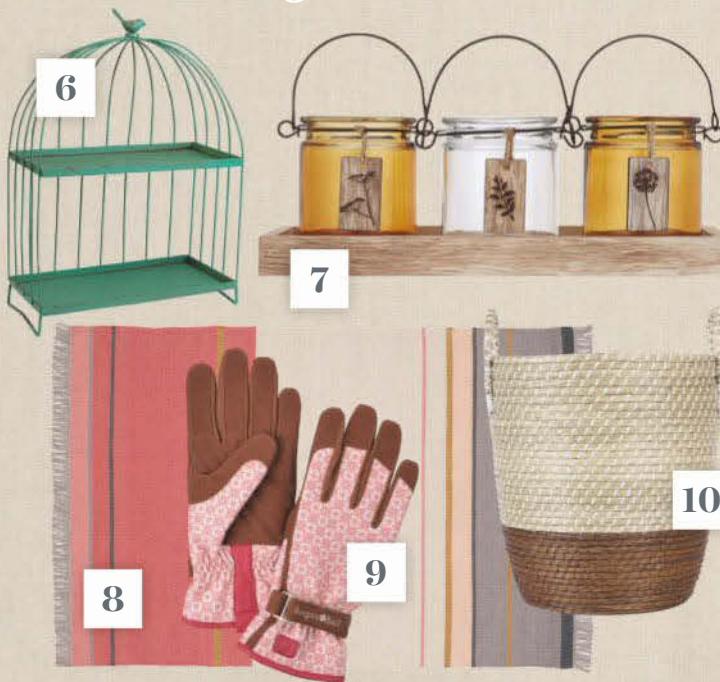
**1 Singing along to our favourite tunes.** Mini Revival radio, 18x14.5cm, £140, Roberts Radio. **2 Soft lambswool over our shoulders.** Eloise throw, 150x165cm, £95, Twig. **3 Homespun touches.** Cross Stitch cushion, 45cm sq, £35, Marks & Spencer. **4 Cheery pink for gardenalia.** Gubbins pots, H10xW26xD20cm, £19.95 (accessories not included), Annabel James. **5 Protecting food when eating outside.** Glass dome and wooden plate, H22xD30cm, £19.99, H&M. »

## Country days

Double duvet sets, Heath Print (large floral), Jenny Print, both £70 each; Florence sham, col Cream (behind Heath pillowcase), £35; Leaf cushion, £30; Florence bedspread, col Navy, £150; double bedstead, £1,249; table, £329; Cody lamp, £95, and most other items, all Dickins & Jones Home at House of Fraser.



## Pretty prints



**6** **Vintage green.** Birdcage gazebo shelf, H52xW40xD19cm, £59.95, Dotcomgiftshop. **7 Casting a warm glow.** Glass jar candle tray, H10.5xW30xD10.5cm, £14, Next. **8 Comforting hand-woven textures underfoot.** Katni rug, 140x200cm, £169, Urbanara. **9 Pretty prints in hard-wearing fabrics to protect green fingers.** Parisienne gloves, £15.95, Berry Red. **10 Storage dipped in delicious seasonal tones.** Laundry basket, H49xW40cm, col Brown, £25, Tesco Direct.

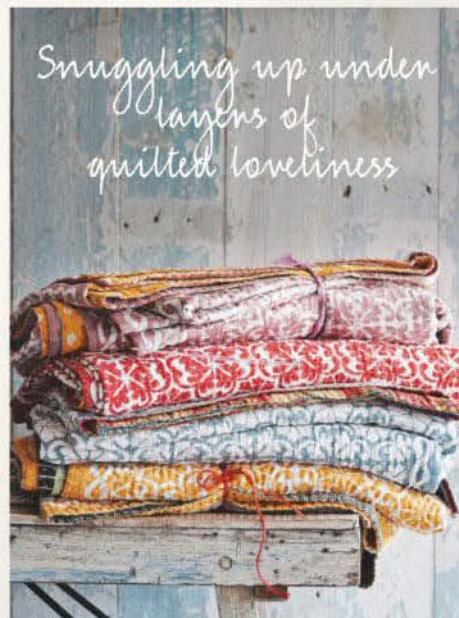
See it, do it, love it

Enjoy vibrant blooms at their best at The National Dahlia Collection in Cornwall. Visit [national-dahlia-collection.co.uk](http://national-dahlia-collection.co.uk).

Watch birds flock around our shores at the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust's Spurn Migration Festival (4-6 September). Visit [yorkshirecoastnature.co.uk](http://yorkshirecoastnature.co.uk).

Turn late-summer produce into delicious jars of jams and chutneys at a preserving workshop in Devon (29 September). To book, visit [trillfarm.co.uk](http://trillfarm.co.uk).

Shack up in a quirky retreat in a secret seaside spot along the Isle of Wight's beautiful coastline. Visit [vintagevacations.co.uk](http://vintagevacations.co.uk).



Chirali bedspreads, £195 each, all Toast.

# Mood of the moment

Prolong summer's magic with bright shades of pink inspired by dahlias. Mix with calming accents of mint green and gold.



(Clockwise, from top left) Catalina Estrada Daisy **wallpaper**, £45 a roll, Paper Moon. Pastel mini **colander**, £8, The Contemporary Home. The Forest greeting **card**, £2.95, Lov Li at Not on the High Street. Hespérides **fabric**, 35540407, £87.10 m, Camengo. Chelsea City Plaids **carpet**, £80 sq m, Brintons. Cows & Flowers **tea towel**, £12, Kate Slater. **Plate**, £11, Frolic & Cheer. Dolly bobbin **ribbons**, £4.95 each, The Original Pop Up Shop. Ceramic **buttons**, small, £2.50 a set, Juliet Reeves Designs; large Higashi, £4, A Alicia. Teaspoon **shovel**, £12, Not on the High Street. Meadow's Edge **fabric**, £54 m, Angie Lewin at St Jude's. Ceylan Hakgala **wallpaper**, £48 a roll, Paper Moon. **Jams**, £1.50 each, The Tiny Marmalade Co. Red Apple **postcard**, £1.25, Showler & Showler. Dried **flowers** (from Country Garden Wheat Sheaf), £27.50, Shropshire Petals. **Chalk**, £1; **clothes pegs**, £4.95 for 12, all Dotcomgiftshop. Buttons **coaster**, £3.50 for 4, Grace & Favour Home. Exotique **fabric**, 35470314, £79.20 m, Camengo. **Scissors**, £14, Anthropologie. **Twine**, £4, The Original Pop Up Shop.

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# Home notes



## MEET OUR FAVOURITE DESIGNER MAKER Jonty Hampson

Joint founder of Hampson Woods, Jonty designs and creates beautiful chopping boards (available at John Lewis, from £65) using wood ethically sourced in the UK.

### How do you make your boards?

Each piece of wood is assessed for knots, cracks and natural blemishes – we like to make a feature of them if we can. It is then shaped, sanded and waxed with wood balm to bring out the grain and colour.

**What inspires you?** Nature and functionality. We like to create beautifully elegant forms that harness what nature has already done. The pieces sit proudly within any home, outlasting any fad or fashion trend.

### What makes your business special?

Our focus on the ethical sourcing of materials. We like to know the provenance of everything we produce and it's very important to us to uphold this even as the business grows.

### What do you love about what you do?

Working with wood. It's constantly changing, so no two pieces are ever the same. I get great satisfaction from assessing that finished piece.

### Describe your creative style in three words.

Functional, elegant and considered.

**Hampson Woods, 0208 985 1055, hampsonwoods.com.**



**Headboard in Wild & Free; cushions in Bird Hop, French Ticking and Wild & Free; quilts in Pretty Maids and Harris Tweed, all from £48 m.**



## Get down to earth

**Earthy tones soften rustic textures** without overwhelming a room, making them an ideal choice for a country-inspired decorating scheme. Get the look with the latest 100% linen fabric collection from Vanessa Arbuthnott, suitable for blinds, cushions and upholstery. It features whimsical wildlife designs – drawn by her two daughters, Rose and Flora – as well as co-ordinating prints. Team with wooden furniture and artisan-inspired accessories for a look that conjures up a feel of the great outdoors.

## WE WANT THIS NOW...

Create the ideal ambience by mixing and matching bases with shades to make your dream light at Pooky. We love the Barty lampbase, H48cm, £55; combine with a sumptuous shade, such as this Gold hand-blocked one, £40, for a lovely way to brighten bedside.



## Book of the month

Fresh clean sheets, fluffy towels, a stocked larder... rediscover the simple pleasures of a beautifully organised home in *Keeping House* by Cindy Harris (£16.99, Ryland Peters & Small). You'll find essential tidying tips and clever cleaning ideas alongside beautiful styling inspiration for every room in the house – a must-read for any proud homeowner.

## Country best Kitchen stools

1
2
3

### Perfect for perching...

#### 1 STEP STOOL,

H46xW42xD63cm, £95,  
Garden Trading.

**2 NICHOLINE**, col Lavender,  
H50x42cm diameter, £70,  
Out There Interiors.

**3 PERCH**, H55xW30xD30cm,  
£190 for 2, Loaf.

# Country notes



## MEET OUR FAVOURITE GARDEN DESIGNER

**Marcus Barnett**

RHS Chelsea Flower Show designer Marcus was a Gold medal winner for The Telegraph garden this year.

### What are the hottest plants in garden design right now?

At Chelsea we used plants with bold colour, such as deep-red Peony 'Buckeye Belle', above. Bright, confident colours are a big trend.

### And your current favourite plant?

I love the deep claret varieties of astrantia, which we also used at Chelsea. The complexity of the flowerhead is amazing and the depth of colour is wonderful set off by complementary planting.

### What wouldn't you be without in your own garden?

From a design perspective, I love water. Its movement, the reflections and the way it creates space and light in a garden.

### How can we introduce some Chelsea chic at home, without the price tag?

*Hesperis* (sweet rocket) has been used in many Chelsea gardens in recent years to great effect. The scented white star-shaped flowers last through spring and summer

if you deadhead.

**Marcus Barnett, 020 7736 9761, marcus.barnett.com.**



## WE WANT THIS NOW...

Savvy gardeners collect seed from their favourite plants in autumn to make more - store in labelled envelopes until spring, £3.95 for 20, Burgon & Ball.

## WOW-FACTOR PLANT

### *Perovskia* 'Blue Spire'

It has aromatic foliage and a lovely haze of sky-blue flowers at a time when most garden interest is in the autumn colour spectrum. Plant in sun, bordering a path where you'll brush past and release the scent. A plant costs £9.99 from Crocus.



## Keep the colour coming

### *Don't give up on summer displays*

just yet. With a little strategic nursery shopping, you can breathe new life into planting that's looking tired. Try adding grasses - *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Kleine Silberspinne' (above) is a good choice - into gaps in borders. Or combine with other late-flowering favourites, such as sedums, echinaceas, rudbeckias and achilleas, to create a prairie-style area that will attract insects. For a quick fix, plant up a pot with a couple of grasses, dainty *Sanguisorba* 'Tanna' and a bright purple dahlia for impact.



## Country best

### Outdoor lanterns

Make the most of those balmy late-summer evenings...

**1 BRASS AND LEATHER LANTERN,** H29cm, £40, Nordic House.

**2 MINERS' LANTERN,** H20cm, £10, Garden Trading at Houseology.

**3 ORLA KIELY TEALIGHT LANTERN,** H12.5cm, £11.99, Internet Gift Store.

**TO DO THIS MONTH...** Plant *Nectaroscordum siculum* bulbs - the bell-shaped creamy flowers flushed with raspberry are a delight.

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## BUY A KITCHEN AND THE SINK CABINET IS ON US...

We're giving away a free sink cabinet worth up to £975 when you spend £8,000 or more on any kitchen.

All you have to do is choose the style, colour and which accessories to combine it with - take a look at [neptune.com](http://neptune.com)

\*Free sink base cabinet offer closes 31st August 2015. For full details please ask in-store or visit [neptune.com/offers](http://neptune.com/offers)

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# Food notes



## MEET OUR FAVOURITE ARTISAN WINE MAKER

### Frazer Thompson

English wine is enjoying record sales, especially at Kent-based Chapel Down led by Frazer Thompson. As England's leading wine producer and one of the UK's most exciting drinks companies, Chapel Down produces world-class sparkling and still wines along with Curious beers and Curious Apple cider. Its innovative Vine Lease scheme gives participants a chance to experience the harvest and enjoy a case of custom-labelled wine (from £245 for one year).

#### What's so special about Chapel Down?

There's no point in just trying to be the best, you have to be the only people who can do what you do. That belief encourages our fantastic team to produce unique wines and beers that truly surprise and delight. This year we've won yet more medals and been acknowledged as a UK Food Hero, as well as an official 'CoolBrand'.

#### What's the best way to serve it?

Try Chapel Down Brut with fish and chips, or our Bacchus 2014 with seafood or grilled chicken.

**Surprise us...** In 2014, our equity crowdfund campaign became the UK's most successful crowdfund, raising £3.95 million in 24 days.

For details about Vine Lease or visiting Chapel Down, call 01580 763033, [chapeldown.com](http://chapeldown.com).

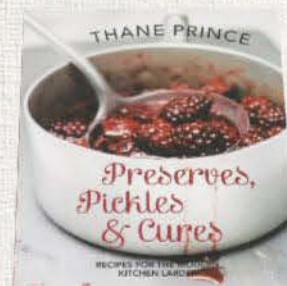


## Choose cavolo nero

*This long, loose-leaved black cabbage* is perfect for late-summer dishes. Cut out the stalk, then blanch, stir-fry or steam the leaves for about five minutes and add garlic butter. Toss cavolo nero through pasta, layer in lasagne or shred into minestrone soup. For a quick pesto: gently pulse about 50g cavolo nero, lightly blanched with a clove of garlic, in a food processor with a pinch of sea salt, 2 tbsp pine nuts and 125ml olive oil. Add a squeeze of lemon juice and 4 tbsp finely grated pecorino or Parmesan, and stir through pasta.

## WE WANT THIS NOW...

A country-style addition to a breakfast table, this has to be the prettiest jar in the pantry. Harvested from foraging bees, Kent Wood Sage Honey has woody forest notes, and comes with a pretty Liberty Print mob cap. Flowers of Liberty Kent Wood Sage Honey, £14.95 for 400g, [Liberty](http://libertyuk.com).



## Book of the month

It's time to fill our pantry shelves with jars of neatly labelled delights, and new *Preserves, Pickles & Cures: Recipes for the Modern Kitchen Larder* by Thane Prince (£16.99, Pavilion) is packed with how to's and wonderful recipes for jams, pickles and cures.

## Country best Kitchen timers



For perfect soft-boiled eggs and beautifully risen sponges and scones...

**1 NOVELTY PEAR TIMER,** £4.95, Amazon.

**2 EVA SOLO TIMER WITH STRAP,** col Coffee Brown, £15, Amara.

**3 KITCHEN TIMER,** col Clay, £12.50, Garden Trading.

# Out & about



## MEET OUR FAVOURITE SHOP OWNERS

Hollie Monhemius & Amy Whitmore

Hollie and Amy's eclectic shop sells everything from painted furniture to organic skincare products - all with a pretty farmhouse vintage-meets-contemporary-cool vibe.

**What inspired you to open your shop, The Bottom Stable?** Our love of interiors and a shared passion for finding beautiful things for people's homes.

**How would you describe the shop's style?** We're a lifestyle, homeware and gift shop sourcing the unusual, from antique furniture and handmade designs to contemporary pieces and quirky curiosities.

**What makes your shop so special?** Surrounded by countryside, we're set in a 16th-century stable block down a single track road, wedged between a village pub, the church and a cricket green. No one can quite believe we're here. This magical setting and our carefully curated, beautiful and interesting finds make it all pretty special!

**The Bottom Stable, Noah's Ark, Lurgashall, West Sussex**

GU28 9ET,  
07851  
742155,  
[thebottomstable.co.uk](http://thebottomstable.co.uk).



## Visit a food festival

**Celebrate nature's bounty** with a trip to a food event showcasing the best of local produce. Head to Hatfield House in Hertfordshire for the Fantastic British Food Festival (5-6 September, [hatfield-house.co.uk](http://hatfield-house.co.uk)) to sample tasty food and drink, and have the chance to pick up foodie gifts such as artisan cheese, cakes and charcuterie. Or, for cookery demonstrations by local chefs, forager-led walks, talks, street food and plenty of family-friendly entertainment, visit Arley Hall Food Festival in Cheshire (19-20 September, [greatbritishfoodfestival.com](http://greatbritishfoodfestival.com)).

## Country best Craft exhibitions

**Be inspired by makers and designers...**

### W IS FOR WALLPAPER, WALES

Discover the various techniques (see below) behind hand-printed wallpaper with makers as they explore historic and contemporary styles. From 26 September to 22 November, [ruthincraftcentre.org.uk](http://ruthincraftcentre.org.uk).

### BRITISH CERAMICS BIENNIAL, STAFFORDSHIRE

See the work of more than 60 ceramic artists, with workshops where visitors of all ages and stages can create their own masterpiece! From 26 September to 8 November, [britishceramicsbiennial.com](http://britishceramicsbiennial.com).

### FOUR CORNERS OF CRAFT, LONDON

Head to the Old Truman Brewery in Brick Lane, where entrepreneurs unite (through Etsy online and British craft organisations) to share the best of contemporary craft. From 24 to 27 September, [etsy.me/fourcornersofcraft](http://etsy.me/fourcornersofcraft).



- **ON COURSE...** Learn how to mix, knead, ferment and bake dough to produce wholesome loaves with master baker Peter Cook at Acton Scott historic working farm in Shropshire. The course takes place on 23 September and costs £90, 01694 781307, [actonscott.com](http://actonscott.com).

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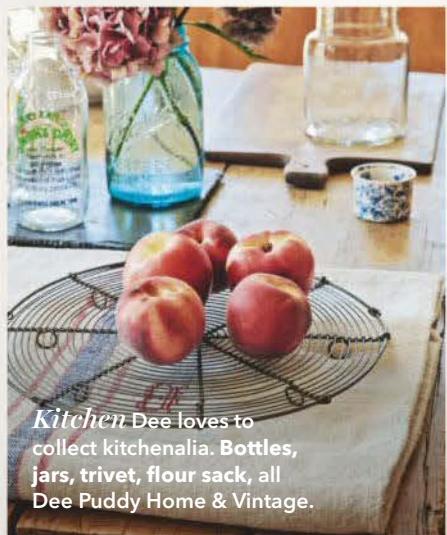
# A golden opportunity

A LOVE OF NATURAL WOOD GIVES DEE PUDDY'S COTTAGE A HOMELY FEEL,  
EMPHASISED BY HER COLLECTION OF VINTAGE AND RUSTIC FINDS



**House** The soft cream of the walls of the cottage complements the oak-framed conservatory and window frames. Exterior walls, painted in House White by Farrow & Ball. »

## Hampshire cottage



*Kitchen* Dee loves to collect kitchenalia. Bottles, jars, trivet, flour sack, all Dee Puddy Home & Vintage.

### *What we love most about living here...*

'Our land has mature oak trees and we are visited by incredible wildlife, including owls, green woodpeckers and even deer'



*Conservatory* This laid-back space has room for a dining area as well as seating, making it perfect for when friends and family visit. Sofa (above), Marks & Spencer.





**Kitchen** (Also left) A carpenter friend, Ian Harfield, made and fitted the units and shelving using oak sourced from Bernard Dru Oak Flooring. The tile and brick surround above the range makes a strong focal point. **Range**, Lacanche. »

*Living room* A neutral palette and natural materials create a fuss-free feel and help maximise light. The sofas were re-covered in denim brushed cotton by Cambrica Interiors. Throws, H&M. Wooden bench (used as a coffee table), Dee Puddy Home & Vintage.



**Dee Puddy had always dreamed** of living in the depths of the countryside and, when she and her partner, Ian Taylor, decided to set up home together, their charming 18th-century cob cottage could not have been a more perfect fit.

'It was a gem of a find, with two acres of land, a pond and a large garden,' says Dee. 'The buying process proved nerve-racking, however, as there wasn't a lot of choice in the area and we ended up going to sealed bids. When we finally got the house, it was such a relief as we had set our hearts on it.'

The house, thought to be a workman's cottage, was in a reasonable state when they moved in more than 20 years ago, so Dee and Ian were able to take their time making their own changes. The biggest job was taking down the original conservatory with its polycarbonate roof that was incredibly noisy when it rained and replacing it with an oak-framed structure. The bathroom and kitchen were also redesigned with the help of their builder and joiner friend Ian Harfield.

'We spent a lot of time planning before beginning work on each room to make sure everything was just so. We had always figured out exactly what we wanted from the space and where we were going to source the materials,' says Dee.

Dee is not the sort of person who buys off the shelf. Instead, she goes to great lengths to find exactly the right thing at the best possible price. The slate she used in the kitchen is a perfect example – this potentially expensive material was sourced direct from a quarry rather than a shop to save money.

Dee and Ian have quite different tastes in decoration and design, and have often had to compromise. 'Ian is a bit of a minimalist, whereas I am drawn to vintage and utilitarian styles,' says Dee. 'I found it quite hard to restrain myself when buying for our home, as I would find so many fabulous things on my travels when sourcing for my online shop, Dee Puddy Home & Vintage. I just couldn't resist trying to sneak in new items in the hope they would become indispensable!'

One thing that the couple do have in common is their love of wood and they have used it throughout the house to create a relaxed interior that they both feel happy with. With work on the house now complete, the couple are able to enjoy their home even more. Dee's business is growing and she's now added a weatherboard work studio in the garden and converted what was once an old garage into a small warehouse.

'It's such a wonderful place to live; we have the best of both worlds, privacy but a sociable village close by. I really can't imagine us moving as there are not many places where you have so much space and wildlife right on your doorstep.'

**Dee Puddy Home & Vintage, 01794 323020, [deepuddy.co.uk](http://deepuddy.co.uk). »**



### At home with...

**Owners** Dee Puddy, owner of online shop Dee Puddy Home & Vintage, and her partner Ian Taylor, a retired IT manager. They moved here in 1992. Dee has a horse called Joseph.

**House** Three-bedroom cob cottage dating from 1750, set in two acres of land.

### On our doorstep...

**Visit...** 'The New Forest National Park (01590 646600, [newforestnpa.gov.uk](http://newforestnpa.gov.uk)) – it is hard to beat for a good walk or cycle ride, whether in the wooded areas or the beautiful heathland.'

**Shop at...** 'Thyme & Tides (01264 810101, [thymeandtidesdeli.co.uk](http://thymeandtidesdeli.co.uk)) in Stockbridge. This deli, bistro and fishmonger is a great place to meet friends for a bite to eat before shopping for delicious food.'

**Go for a meal at...** 'The Rockingham Arms (01794 324798, [rockinghamarms.co.uk](http://rockinghamarms.co.uk)) in West Wellow. The characterful pub has a Sunday lunch menu that is especially welcome after a long walk in the forest.'

## Hampshire cottage



**Studio** The interior is clad in reclaimed tongue-and-groove panelling, while the exterior (below left) is oak weatherboard sourced from the New Forest.



### *What makes this house a home...*

'The seclusion of the house and its surroundings. It just makes you feel that you are away from all the hustle and bustle of life'



**Bathroom** The oak theme continues in the bathroom. Bath, basin, Villeroy & Boch. Similar towels, bath mat, Cologne & Cotton.



**Main bedroom** Linen throws and sacking pillowcases add to the rustic look. Wall lights, Jim Lawrence.



*Guest bedroom*

The lamp was a gift from a friend and the bright yellow shade adds a splash of colour to the pale blue room. Walls, painted in Blue Ground by Farrow & Ball. Bed, John Lewis. Throws, H&M. Cushions, Dee Puddy Home & Vintage. »

Be inspired by...

# Dee's conservatory



For more ideas go to  
[housetohome.co.uk/  
countryhomesandinteriors](http://housetohome.co.uk/countryhomesandinteriors)

**1** Jute and cotton **rug**, 140x70cm, £24.99, H&M. **2** Rectangular carved **stool**, H25xW45xD32cm, £39.99, Zara Home. **3** Green glass **bottle**, £16, H19cm, French Connection. **4** French jam **pot**, H10.5cm, £8.50, Labour and Wait. **5** Linea Linen Stripe **cushion**, col Black, 50cm sq, £25, House of Fraser. **6** Tall recycled glass **vase**, H36cm, £20, Cox & Cox. **7** Whitewash oval rattan storage **basket**, H9xW39xD32cm, £15, The Basket Company. **8** Bermuda Medium **sofa**, H91xW195xD90cm, £749, Marks & Spencer.



Modern  
Country  
Classic

## Oak-framed conservatory

Extend a home with a classic combination of wood and glass.

### Need to know...

Strength and longevity are bywords for oak and it is a lovely material to live with. If left untreated, oak will age to a silvery finish. Green oak has a high moisture content; the cracks it develops as it shrinks and dries are part of the charm. The alternative is kiln- or air-dried 'seasoned' oak.

### Where to buy...

- **Arboreta** for green oak garden rooms.
- **David Salisbury** for a rustic oak orangery.
- **Prime Oak** for seasoned oak conservatories.

Find the perfect  
*floor tiles*



**1** Onyx Beige Gloss Stone Effect Ceramic, £24.99 sq m; **2** Crema Marfil Stone Effect Beige Satin Ceramic, £20.63 sq m; **3** Beige Matt Porcelain, £26.99 sq m, all 300x600mm, Wickes.

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[www.parkerknoll.co.uk](http://www.parkerknoll.co.uk)

# Modern history

MERRY ALBRIGHT GAVE A NEW LEASE OF LIFE TO A RUNDOWN COTTAGE  
AT THE HEART OF A MEDIEVAL VILLAGE





**Kitchen** The extension allows for a family dining area that's flooded with light. **Units**, col Mushroom, DeVol. **Worktop**, Border Oak. **Lights**, similar from Tinsmiths. **Tiles**, Floors of Stone. **Rug**, Crucial Trading. **Chairs**, similar from John Lewis. »



## At home with...

**Owners** Merry and Ben Albright, who work in sales and design at oak-frame specialist Border Oak. They live here with their two children, Minerva, 10, and Gabriel, six, and moved into the house in 2014.

**House** A two-bedroom semi-detached Victorian cottage, purchased in 2012.

**Owning a house in the medieval** market square of their picture-postcard village had long been the dream of Merry and Ben Albright. ‘Houses in this part of the village rarely come on the market,’ says Merry, ‘so we knew this was a unique opportunity.’ They’d lived in the village for 15 years and, by coincidence, had tried to buy the house opposite the cottage they now live in 10 years ago. Then, in 2012, they struck lucky. ‘This cottage had been repossessed and, although the agents had a massive viewing list, the administrator needed a quick sale. We were desperate to buy it and completed less than four weeks later,’ says Merry.

Despite its sad state and, having been empty for almost a decade, the cottage had huge potential. ‘Sadly there were no original features left and the interior was an unusual combination of salmon pink, faux wood and swirly carpets,’ says Merry. But the lack of original architectural character meant that, while sympathetically restoring the exterior, Merry and Ben had a completely free rein on the interior.

They started the renovation in late 2013 and the work took about six months. The biggest project was the single-storey oak-framed extension at the rear. Merry and Ben also added a porch, new handmade windows, electrics and plumbing and, as they wanted to move a few doors and knock out two walls, it made sense to insulate, re-plaster and then completely redecorate, adding new flooring throughout.

Re-planning the layout has helped the new-look house flow better. ‘Before, you needed to go through the living room to ➤

**Living room**  
A fresh cream has invigorated what was once a dark, oppressive space. **Sofa** (hand-built to Merry’s design), Thomas Clough. **Footstool**, Baileys. **Cushions**, Milton & Manor, Cabbages & Roses. **Bird jug**, house (opposite, top left), both Black Bough. **Walls**, painted in Creami Colour by Edward Bulmer Pots of Paint.

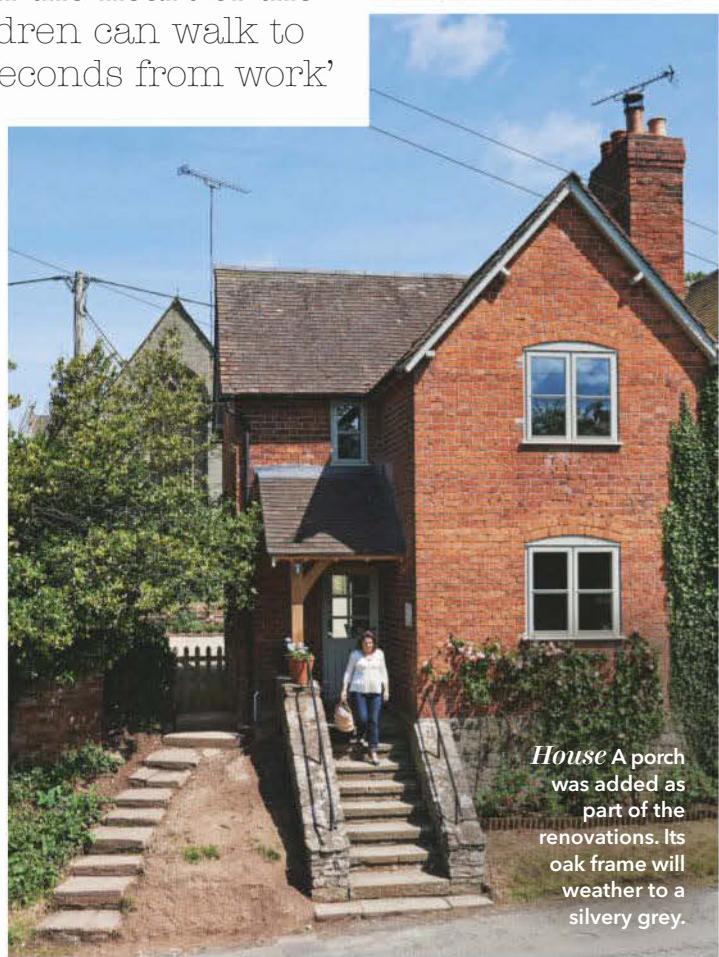


### *What we love most about living here...*

'It's lovely to be in the heart of the village – the children can walk to school and we're seconds from work'



**Hallway**  
Using the same flooring throughout helps the rooms to flow from front to back.  
Porcelain tiles, Floors of Stone.



**House** A porch was added as part of the renovations. Its oak frame will weather to a silvery grey.

*What makes this house a home...*

'It's magical to wake up and listen to the church bells ringing from the bell tower'





### Main bedroom

A keen upcycler, Merry designed the mirror from a plank of decorative timber found in an architectural salvage yard. **Bed**, similar from Feather & Black. **Bedlinen**, The White Company.

### Children's bedroom

Minerva's side of this room features pops of pink and vintage furniture. **Suitcase**, Liberty. **Sleigh bed**, similar from Bump. **Chair, chest**, Llewelyn & Company.

get to all other rooms via oddly positioned doors,' says Merry. 'Now the cottage feels so much more spacious.'

Rather than recreate a period interior, Merry opted for a lighter, more modern feel. To inject rustic interest, she asked her carpenters to install a tongue-and-groove ceiling in the extension and similar panelling in the bathroom. Walls and ceilings were painted in the same creamy tone throughout, with just one more colour used for doors, stairs, skirting boards and window frames. 'I didn't want to clutter the space, as the house is small,' says Merry. Her colour scheme not only achieves that aim, but also creates consistency.

'I'm actually very nervous when it comes to paint,' says Merry, 'but luckily the renowned colourist Edward Bulmer lives in the village and I was able to ask his advice and use his Natural paints, which are made less than a mile away.'

The layout upstairs is largely unchanged, apart from the bathroom, which was once a shocking raspberry pink. 'We gutted the entire room, re-sited the walls, laid new floor tiles and added a classic white suite,' Merry says. 'The pink stuff went straight in the skip, but must have been more valuable than I thought, as it was last seen disappearing down the lane in the back of an old estate car in the dead of night.'

The result of their labours was better than Merry or Ben had ever hoped. 'We're thrilled that a property, once derelict and empty, is no longer a disappointment to our historic village,' says Merry. 'So many people have complimented us on the transformation and we find that very humbling.' »



Wellies dry in the sun after a long family walk through the hedgerows.

## Herefordshire village house



### On our doorstep...

**Visit...** 'Pembridge village, the jewel in the crown of Herefordshire's Black and White Village Trail and recently voted RHS Village of the Year. It has historic architecture, as well as good shops, an art gallery and an amazing tearoom. Visit the riverside and nature reserve - perfect for picnics, paddling and minnow fishing - and it's like stepping back in time.'

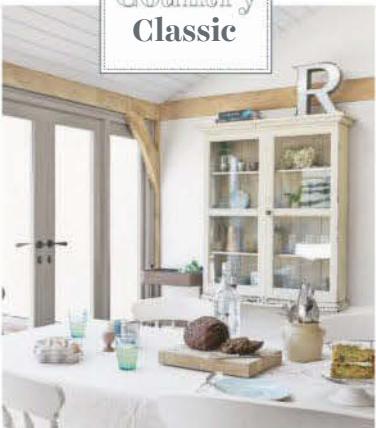
**Shop at...** Tinsmiths (01531 632083, [tinsmiths.co.uk](http://tinsmiths.co.uk)) in Ledbury. This is a veritable treasure trove of homewares, from ticking fabric and willow baskets to industrial lighting and upholstered furniture.'

**Go for a meal at...** 'The Stagg Inn (01544 230221, [thestagg.co.uk](http://thestagg.co.uk)) in Titley, near Kington. Holder of a Michelin star (the first pub to be given one), it's the place to go for a special meal or Sunday lunch.'

**Bathroom** Cool blue grey gives a contemporary feel.  
**Bath, basin, White Hall Bathrooms.**  
**Wood panelling,** painted in Mizzle by Farrow & Ball.

# Be inspired by... Merry's kitchen

**Modern  
Country  
Classic**



## Wall cabinet

This is an ideal piece for one-off items. Great, too, for eye-catching displays.

### Need to know...

Getting cabinetry up off the floor makes a room feel spacious. Select glazed cabinets for extra sparkle, finished with decorative cornicing.

Solid-wood cupboards get their country flair from wooden knobs and strap hinges. Cabinets are only as secure as the fixings, so use the correct screws and wall plugs. Some rely on cabinet hangers slotted into a wall plate (try Häfele), while others come with hooks or are simply screwed from inside the cabinet.

### Where to buy...

- **Papa Theo** for glazed wall cabinets.
- **Tumble Home** for country designs.
- **Melody Maison** for slimline, glass-fronted wall cabinets.

Find the perfect  
*furniture paint*



All £39.50 for 2.5L, Autentico Vintage Chalk.



For more ideas go to  
[housetohome.co.uk/  
countryhomesandinteriors](http://housetohome.co.uk/countryhomesandinteriors)

**1** Cecile dining chair, col Soft Grey, £75, John Lewis. **2** Parlane utensil pot, H21x17cm diameter, £19.95, Frances Brown Home. **3** Stirrup 3 wall lamp, H35cm, £346.80, Richard Hathaway Lighting. **4** Plant pots, H10cm, £1.75; H13cm, £2.50; H15cm, £3, all Pretty Maison. **5** Hemstitch tablecloth, 180x140cm, col Dove Grey, £80, The Linen Works. **6** Tilt-head stand mixer, 4.8L bowl, col Cast Iron Black, £429, KitchenAid. **7** Pestle and mortar, 13cm diameter, £15, Marks & Spencer. **8** Kitchen trolley, H73xW60xD40cm, £249, Rockett St George.

# A taste of the country

SARAH THOMAS' HISTORIC PERIOD COTTAGE HAS BEEN BROUGHT BANG UP TO DATE WITH A CHIC MODERN COUNTRY INTERIOR





**Kitchen** Sarah opted for handmade painted units and added pops of red. **Units, plate rack**, Middleton Bespoke. **China**, Pip Studio, Emma Bridgewater. **Blind fabric**, Manuel Canovas. **Rise-and-fall light**, John Lewis. **Hens**, Biju Home. **Cake**, Cake Angel Sussex. »



## At home with...

**Owners** Sarah Thomas, the founder of The Loft Pickles & Jams, and her husband, Jason, a transport manager, plus two cats, Izzy and Marvin, and Schnauzer, Ozzy.

**House** A Sussex hayloft converted around 75 years ago, with two bedrooms.

*'It was quite simply time* for a life change so we decided to move to the countryside,' says Sarah Thomas about her and her husband Jason's relocation to West Sussex. Both she and Jason were no longer enjoying city life in Berkshire, and Sussex was the obvious choice as they had family there. 'We felt drawn to the county,' says Sarah. 'We were keen to live in a village as we felt it was important to get involved with the local community.'

Sarah and Jason made the decision to move in January 2007, and so began the hunt for a cottage. 'I viewed this one with my sister and I knew it was right,' says Sarah. 'I spotted the outside studio, which consisted of breeze blocks at the time, but I could see its potential. Then I had to convince Jason! We had a list of things we wanted in our new house, and this didn't have any of them. It had no hallway and no parking, and it was smaller than the house we were living in. Our wishlist went out of the window.'

The couple fell in love with the cottage's open-plan ground floor and its light and bright conservatory. But converting the outside studio became their first priority. 'We had it plastered and fitted a shower room,' says Sarah. The sitting area was then transformed with zingy green accents as Sarah wanted to bring in the colours of the garden, and she later added purples for definition.

Sarah and Jason then turned their attention to the cottage, giving it a neutral backdrop and injecting colour with accessories. They also added some period character by »

**Hayloft** The whitewashed Sussex hayloft dates from 1840 and is full of character. There is a courtyard garden at the rear, containing a separate studio.

**Dining hall**  
The front door (above left) leads straight into the welcoming dining area (opposite).  
**Chinese cabinet,** John Lewis. **Runner,** Roger Oates.  
**Chandelier,** Biju Home. **Walls,** painted in Joa's White by Farrow & Ball.



*What makes this house a home...*

‘The cottage has rooms that flow really well and link to the garden when entertaining family and friends’

*Studio entrance*

Sarah saw the potential of the courtyard studio.

Coat rack,  
cupboards,

Middleton Bespoke.

*What we love most about living here...*

'The idyllic village location at the foot of the South Downs, but with only a short drive to Brighton'





### *Living room*

Lime and purple accessories give a modern twist.  
**Armchair,** Laura Ashley. **Console table,** Vintage Maison. **Rug,** The Braided Rug Company. **Star,** Cox & Cox. **Pot,** Royal Botanical Gardens Kew at Not on the High Street. **Jug,** prints, John Lewis. **Blind fabric,** (above right), Laura Ashley, made by Barnard Interiors. **Wallpaper,** Farrow & Ball.

replacing the radiators with reclaimed ones from a salvage yard and introducing traditional-style bathroom furniture.

Their previous house had been a modern one and so Sarah and Jason soon realised that the furniture they had brought with them wasn't quite right. 'I felt we needed vintage pieces so we bought items that were more in keeping.' Built in 1840, the cottage served as the hayloft and stable for the local coaching inn. It was later converted into a house, and for 50 years was lived in by a family who grew produce in the garden and made jams, chutneys and pickles. Sarah, with a catering background, was inspired to begin her own business, The Loft Pickles & Jams.

Because the jams and pickles are made in her kitchen, a new design soon became a necessity. 'We wanted a country kitchen, but it had to be very practical,' says Sarah. 'I chose Middleton Bespoke to make it for me and talked through my needs with the founder, Jasper. For instance, he made me a bespoke central island which has lots of storage and it can be moved around.'

The house now successfully combines work and play for Sarah. 'We love living here. We take Ozzy for walks on the Downs or get up early and go to the beach as it's only 10 minutes away. We love the local villages with their independent shops, and have lots of friends here running small businesses. It was definitely a change for the better.'

**The Loft Pickles & Jams, 01903 891476,**  
**loftpickles.com. >**



## West Sussex hayloft



**Main bedroom A**  
brass bed takes pride of place in the attic space.  
**Bed,** And So to Bed.  
**Blind,** Barnard Interiors.  
**Chair,** Vintage Maison.  
**Chandelier,** similar from Fritz Fryer. **Throw,** bedlinen, John Lewis.  
**Cushions,** The White Company, John Lewis.

### On our doorstep...

**Visit...** 'Petworth House (01798 342207, nationaltrust.org.uk), a beautiful property set in stunning grounds. It's a great place to take a dog for a walk as it's very picturesque and there's a beautiful lake.'

**Shop at...** 'Vintage Maison Studio (07881 818513, vintagemaison.co.uk) based in The Corn Store in Pulborough. It's very individual with unusual vintage finds. We have bought many items from there.'

**Go for a meal at...** 'The Ginger Fox (01273 857888, thegingerfox.com) in Hassocks. It does seasonal food and lots of fish. The food tastes wonderful and the presentation is beautiful.'

Be inspired by...  
Sarah's living room

**Modern  
Country  
Classic**



**Corner sofa**

Latch onto the trend for L-shaped seating that's comfy and sociable.

*Need to know...*

The latest styles give you the option to combine two- or three-seater sofas with a corner section to create seating solutions tailored to your room's dimensions. By making up corner sofas from individual units such as left- and right-hand pieces, central modules and a corner piece, furniture can be gathered around a fireplace in winter, then rearranged in summer. Also consider a sofa with a chaise extending at a right angle, so you can put your feet up in style.

*Where to buy...*

- Marks & Spencer for modular units.
- Sofa.com for sofas with a chaise.
- Sofa Workshop for a corner sofabed.

Find the perfect  
*wood varnish*



1 Dark Oak; 2 Deep Mahogany; 3 Medium Oak, all Ronseal Satin Interior Varnish, £8.99 for 250ml, Homebase.



1 Philo velvet **chaise sofa**, H94xW311xD182cm, col Champagne, £2,950, Arlo & Jacob.

2 Urbanity **jug**, H19.5cm, £22.99, Gisela Graham. 3 Avoca Pioneer lambswool **throw**, 183x142cm, £95, Amara. 4 Dove of Peace by Picasso framed **print**, £139.99, Art.co.uk.

5 Jute **rug**, 122x69cm, col Dawn, £45, The Braided Rug Company. 6 Kew **planter**, H25cm, col Aubergine, £25, Terrace & Garden. 7 Half-moon **console table**, H76xW76xD39cm, col Grey Wash, £229, Décor. 8 Florentine **fabric**, col Citrus, £66 m, Clarke & Clarke.

# Labour of love

HEATHER AND STEVE BOYLAND PUT HEART AND SOUL  
INTO THE RENOVATION OF A DERELICT COTSWOLD BARN

B A R N

Post  
The Old Barn

THE  
AVENHA



**Barn** The stable door was designed by Steve, who also made the windows. Bigger glazed doors at the back of the barn make the most of the rural views.

**Hallway** Terracotta tiles and a bench provide a classic country welcome. Ceiling airer, Lakeland. Barn letters, heart wreath, Vinegar Hill. »



*Kitchen Set against off-white units made by Steve, an island in distressed purple creates a wow factor. Range cooker, Rangemaster. Blind, Vanessa Arbuthnott.*



*What makes this house a home...*

*'All the hard work and love that have gone into it. As well as Steve's achievements in building it, we have had help from our family – it has been a real family affair'*

**Living area**

Pastel shades and jewel-bright velvets add summer colour.  
**Pink sofa**, DFS.  
**Cushions**, John Lewis, Next and Laura Ashley. **Chair**, similar from Loaf.

**Turning a crumbling property** into the home of your dreams is high on many people's wishlists. If you can do the work yourself, so much the better. Heather and Steve Boyland had always hoped to renovate a building one day, not least because Steve is a skilled carpenter. Having done up a cottage in the Gloucestershire countryside and lived there for 30 years while they brought up their son, Mitchell, Steve was itching for a more ambitious challenge. When he and Heather heard about a nearby farm where buildings were being sold off, it seemed like fate.

One of the buildings, a derelict barn, had views across the fields. 'We fell in love with it immediately,' says Heather. 'It was so quiet and peaceful, and the epitome of the rural idyll.' The downside was that not only was it in a dreadful state, but a tree was growing through the middle. 'That did not deter Steve, though, as he'd wanted to work on a shell.'

The couple stayed in their cottage throughout the project and Steve juggled the renovations with working part-time. An architect was enlisted to help with the design and layout and instead of the four bedrooms that had been granted following planning permission, they went for two en-suite bedrooms. Downstairs, they opted for an open-plan layout and chose to emphasise the vaulted ceiling by creating a dramatic dining and living space.

The barn had large front and back openings where the cattle once walked through, and the couple decided to enlarge the entrance at the back to accommodate a »

**At home with...**

**Owners** Heather Boyland, who works for a cleaning company, and her husband Steve, a carpenter and joiner.

They live here with their Border Collie, Sky, and have a grown-up son, Mitchell.

**House** A barn built in 1700, bought by Heather and Steve in 2005. They moved in in 2012.



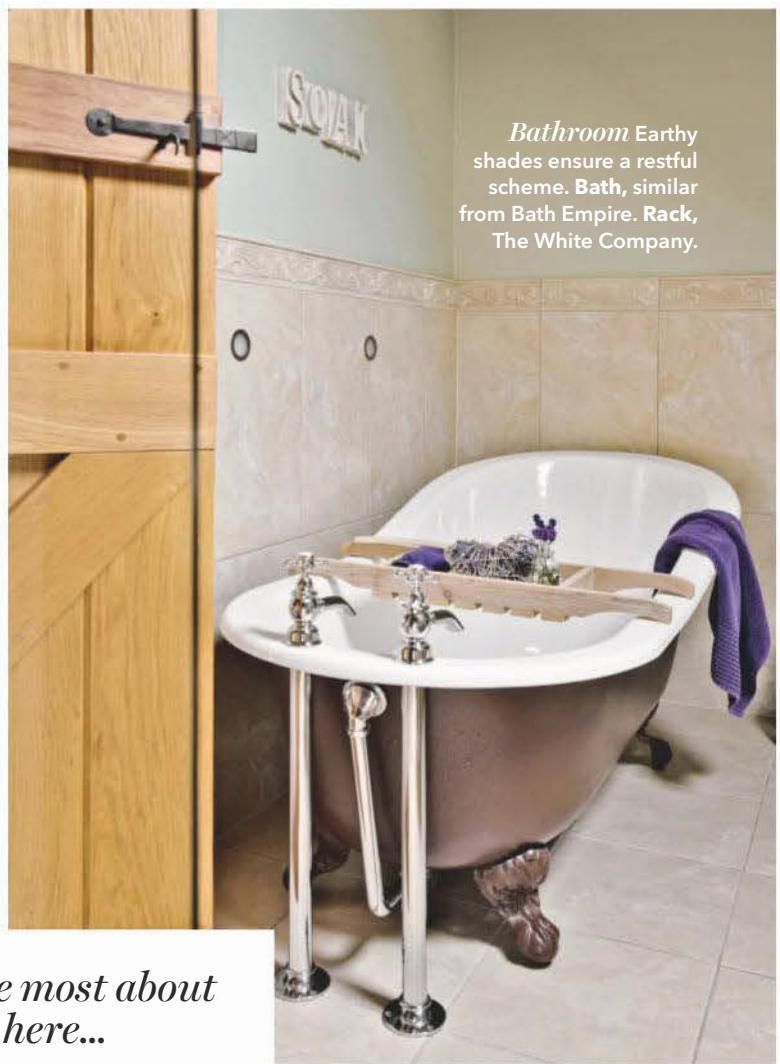
glazed floor-to-ceiling doorway that floods the house with light and allows them to enjoy the rural views.

Once the layout was decided, Steve set to work. The tree was cleared and a new roof using original tiles plus reclaimed ones was added. He then made and installed every window. Plumbing and electrics were next, and a floor was laid with underfloor heating. The space was carved into rooms, and Steve built a staircase and upper floor for the bedrooms and en suites. With the structural work complete, Heather could indulge her passion for decorating. 'I like interiors shopping and spend countless days hunting for things. I love shabby chic and was keen to use earthy colours, as they make for easy co-ordination.' Exposed walls are key features and – along with the stone fireplace and vaulted ceilings in both the living area and bedrooms – add character while teaming beautifully with the mellow tones of the bare wood floors. Heather chose a neutral palette for the walls, which allowed her to bring in colour with furniture and accessories.

The couple then turned their attention to the outside, creating a flower-filled garden that includes a vegetable patch and a shepherd's hut that Steve made himself – having found original shepherd's hut wheels online.

The renovation was a labour of love, but Steve's hard work paid off when he became a finalist in the Local Authority Building Control (LABC) Building Excellence Awards. 'Steve had always wanted to do a renovation,' says Heather, 'and I'm thrilled with the end result.' »

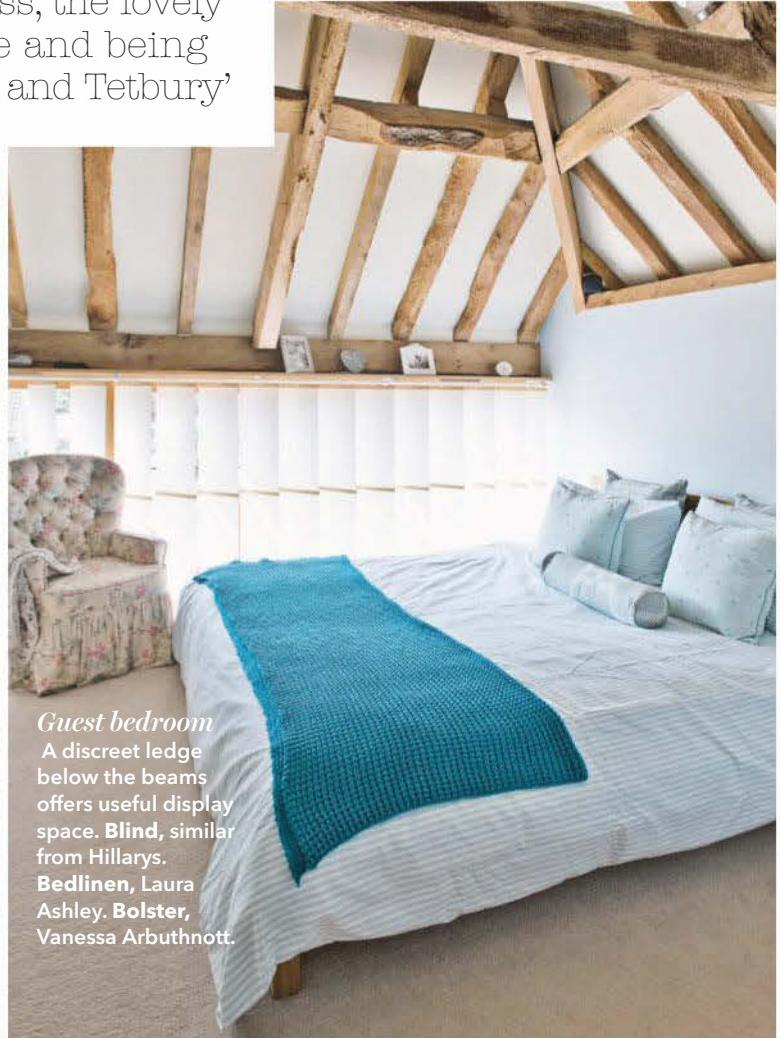
**Main bedroom**  
A French-style bed makes an elegant centrepiece, offset by the statement wallpaper by the door (opposite page, top left). The bedside tables and blue trunk are junk-shop and car-boot finds. **Bed**, similar from Loaf. **Wallpaper, bedlinen**, John Lewis. **Blinds, lamp**, Laura Ashley.



Bathroom Earthy shades ensure a restful scheme. Bath, similar from Bath Empire. Rack, The White Company.

### *What we love most about living here...*

'The quietness, the lovely countryside and being close to Bath and Tetbury'



*Guest bedroom*  
A discreet ledge below the beams offers useful display space. Blind, similar from Hillarys.  
Bedlinen, Laura Ashley. Bolster, Vanessa Arbuthnott.

## Gloucestershire barn conversion

### On our doorstep...

**Visit...** 'Bath. This beautiful city, known for its natural hot springs, also boasts legendary Georgian architecture. We visit whenever we can.'

**Shop at...** 'Shabby Chic Interiors (01454 322200, shabbychicinteriors.co.uk) in Chipping Sodbury. You can pick up something a little bit

different, and the town is really nice with the Fabulous Baker Brothers' Hobbs House Bakery (01454 321629, hobbshousebakery.co.uk), plus craft shops, vintage fairs and a lovely florist.'

**Go for a meal at...** 'The Old House at Home (01454 218227, ohhpubs.co.uk) in Burton. An old country pub with a highly recommended Sunday lunch.'

### Shepherd's hut

This traditional structure, built by Steve, offers shelter for Heather's favourite summer blooms.



Be inspired by...

# Heather's hallway

**Modern  
Country  
Classic**



## Ceiling airer

A traditional, practical solution to drying laundry indoors.

### Need to know...

Before the time of tumble dryers a ceiling airer was a must for damp days when drying outside wasn't possible. To take a load of washing securely, the airer must be attached to the ceiling joists, or you could consider a wall-mounted version instead. Traditional airers have wood slats and painted metal ends, lightweight modern ones are made from aluminium.

### Where to buy...

- PulleyMaid for a classic ceiling airer and wall rack.
- Store for a wood and zinc wall rack.
- Lakeland for a modern ceiling airer.

Find the perfect *terracotta tiles*



1 Rustic Red, £27.45 sq m; 2 Rojo, £44.95 sq m; 3 Honey Handmade, £44.95 sq m, all Walls & Floors.



For more ideas go to  
[housetohome.co.uk/  
countryhomesandinteriors](http://housetohome.co.uk/countryhomesandinteriors)

- 1 Classic ceiling **airer**, from £39.99 for L90cm, PulleyMaid. 2 French Ticking **fabric**, col Clay/Damson, £48 m, Vanessa Arbuthnott. 3 Gatherer **hook**, H20x11.25cm diameter, £14.95, Anthropologie. 4 Somerton willow **basket**, H38xW52xD41cm, from £70, Neptune. 5 Old English wooden **letter**, H12cm, £6.25, Posh Graffiti. 6 Three French Hens **cushion cover**, 45cm sq, £15, Not on the High Street. 7 Oak photograph **frame**, 10cm sq, £12, John Lewis. 8 Cushion **bench** with baskets, H47xW110xD36cm, £250, Out There Interiors.



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AUGUST 2015

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# Harvest chic

Give your home a festival feel with modern rustic style. Bring together vibrant prairie motifs, warm seasonal hues and earthy natural textures for an end-of-summer celebration

*Welcome guests to a hoedown style party*

Set the scene outside your entrance with bales of straw and wooden crates full of late-summer fruit and flowers. See page 64 for details.





INSTAGRAM

For more inspiration and behind-the-scenes pics from our shoots, follow us at [countryhomesmag](#)

Gather round a floral themed table

A botanical-inspired tablecloth and geometric print cushions add colour and contrast, while copper tealights cast a soft glow.

See page 64 for details. >>



*Get party ready with  
colourful flooring*

Choose rugs and runners  
featuring graphic patterns and  
coarse textures for striking style.  
See page 64 for details.



*Layer jazzy colour  
on a low key sofa*

Keep the furniture subtle (the fabric on our sofa was inspired by sackcloth) and offset with cushions in a confident combo of pattern and colour.

See page 64 for details. »





### *Display pots and crocks on a pegboard*

Hang mugs on hooks, stand jugs on ledges or drape party decorations on this versatile kitchen backdrop. See page 64 for details.

Create a rustic cloakroom

Use seed-inspired wallpaper to make a welcoming space with plenty of hooks for hats and a handy bench. See page 64 for details. »





*Pamper your  
overnight guests*

Offer a clutch of pre-bedtime essentials in quirky containers - an enamel beaker for soaps and toothbrushes, and a rustic zinc planter to offer towels and bath treats. See page 64 for details.

*Sleep and dream*

Fall into a bed made comfy with foliage-patterned pillows, knitted cushions and crisp bedlinen.  
See page 64 for details. »



# All the details: products and prices

Pages 56-57



### Welcome guests to a hoedown-style party

Chalk **paddle board**, £55, Home Barn. Apple pick **ladder**, similar from The French House. Wirework **apple picker**, £12, Garden Trading. Ladies' raffia **sun hat**, £38, Hen & Hammock. Storm **lantern**, £29, Sparrow and Co. Wooden **crate**, £39.95, Dassie. **Vase**, painted in Fruit Salad, £30.52 for 750ml, Earthborn.

### Gather round a floral-themed table

Harrogate **table**, £1,460, Neptune. Reclaimed wood rustic **bench**, £295, Home Barn. **Cushions**, Peggy Tile, col Coral, £55 m, Louise Body. Botanist Knoll **tablecloth**, £88, Anthropologie. (On table) Enamel **dinner plates** and **bowls**, £17.95 each; painted white **crate**, £26.95, all

Dassie. Terracotta pasta **bowls**, £5 each, Sainsbury's. Copper honeycomb **tumblers** (as tealight holders), £6 each, Oliver Bonas. Recycled glass San Miguel **wine glasses**, £4 each, Sainsbury's. Soaré water hyacinth **place mats**, £3.50 each, Ikea. Gold-dipped **cutlery**, £32, Anthropologie. Small zinc vase (as **cutlery holder**), £12.50, Cox & Cox. Vintage mason **jar**, £18, Ines Cole. Zinc florist's **vase**, £10.50; vintage-style footed **platter**, £17.50, both Cox & Cox. (On ledge, from left) Round glass **candle holders**, similar from John Lewis. Glass and marble hurricane **lantern**, £40, Croft collection, John Lewis. Rosie **serving bowl**, £48, Anthropologie. (On wall) Bamboo **lantern**, col Grey, £19, Fable. **Wall panel**, Peggy Tile, as cushion before. Festoon **lights**, £35, Cox & Cox.

Pages 58-59



### Get party-ready with colourful flooring

Stockholm **rug**, £160, Ikea. Triangle **rug**, £90, Tesco Direct. Cinnabar **rug**, from £195, Loaf. Wire **basket**, £52, This Modern Life. Zinc florist's **vase**, as before. Carpet beater, £14; corn **broom**, £12; ladies' raffia **sun hat**, £38, all Hen & Hammock. **Cushions** (from left): 1 Whitechapel, £65, Flock. 2 Malmo, 2054/81, £39 m, Villa Nova. 3 Ombré, £27, Cox & Cox. 4 Dashes, £28, MissPrint Home collection, John Lewis. Cashmere blend cable-knit **throw**, £90; water hyacinth **basket**, £55, both Croft collection, John Lewis.

### Layer jazzy colour on a low key sofa

**Cushions** (from left): 1 Malmo, 2054/81, £39 m, Villa Nova. 2 Diagonal Zig Zag, col Neon Orange, £32, Oliver Bonas. 3 Hetsa, £28 m, Scion. 4 Patchwork in (from left) Blomma, £32 m; Ester, £28 m; Hetsa, £28 m, all Scion. Clavering large **sofa** in Ullswater Chalk, £1,820,

Sofas & Stuff. Gryning **wallpaper**, £242 for a 13.5x53cm roll, Carl collection by Sandberg at Liberty. Poste **coffee table**, £245, Loaf. (On table) Native **bowl**, £50, Sparrow and Co. Geometric copper **bowl**, £20, Linea Home at House of Fraser. Linen bray **bread bag**, from £11, Rowen & Wren. Vintage-style flower pot **candle**, £7.50, Cox & Cox. Thurlough crewelwork **rug**, £348, Anthropologie. Rectangular **baskets**, from £27, Neptune. Exhibition console **table**, £325, Loaf. (On console) Wooden tapered wire **lantern**, £35, Sainsbury's. Milk **bottles**, £16 for 4; floral print paper **straws**, £3.75 for 25, all Peach Blossom at Not on the High Street. Rectangular **roaster**, from £30, House of Fraser. Copper bud **vase**, £40 for 3, Cox & Cox. Vintage Mason **jar**, as before. **Twine**, from a selection, Hobbycraft. Striped round **baskets**, £35 for 3, Littlewoods. Humphrey **floor lamp**, £299, Olive & The Fox. **Ladder**, from a selection, The French House. Burnished copper hanging **frame**, £25, Cox & Cox. Tealight **lanterns**, £11.95, Orla Kiely at Wild & Wolf.

Pages 60-61



### Display pots and crocks on a pegboard

Peg-it-all wall-mounted wood storage **panel**, £175, Kreisdesign. Ceramic **canisters** (from top left), Retro, col Blue, £5; Ikat, cols Dark Grey and Red, both £6, all Tesco Direct. Enamel **mugs**, £10.95 each, Dassie. Soup **tureen**, £20, House of Fraser. Rosie **casserole dish** (standing on end), £38, Anthropologie. Gold glitter **garland**, £6; **hessian** (on bottles), £5 for 2m; chalkboard **labels**, £4 for 12, all Hobbycraft. Oak **paddle board**, £16; San Miguel **tumbler**, £2.50 for 4; copper-coated **kettle**, £25, all Sainsbury's. Leather strap **bread board**, £38, Rowen & Wren. Thrift **chopping board**, £32, House of Fraser. Floral print paper **straws**, £3.75 for 25, Peach Blossom at Not on the High Street. Ikat **bowls**, £8 each, West Elm. Birch **tray**, £8, Ikea; outside edge painted in Fruit Salad, £30.52 for

750ml, Earthborn. Linen seersucker **tea towel**, col Blue and White, £12, Workshop Living. Fargrik **side plate**, col Turquoise, £13.50 for 18-piece service, Ikea.

### Create a rustic cloakroom

**Wallpaper**, Totak, col Saffron, £36 a roll, Scion. **Peg rail**, £49; Jack Russell **cushion**, £49; **rug**, from £49, all Scumble Goosie. Cage **light**, £79; **sun hat**, £38, both Hen & Hammock. Badri rancher **hat**, £48, Anthropologie. **Bench**, £130, Ikea. Native **platter**, £60, Sparrow and Co. Aldgate East **cushion**, col Major Mustard, £65, Flock. Elba **throw**, £150, Fable by Bedeck. **Hessian, ribbons**, from a selection; spray **paint**, £9; jute **bag**, £1.99; linen **bunting**, £12, all Hobbycraft. **Basket**, £50 for 2, House of Fraser. **Skirting**, painted in Apple, £26 for 1L, Little Greene. Wellies, stylist's own.

Pages 62-63



### Pamper your overnight guests

Aged zinc **trough**, £45 for 2, Cox & Cox. Royal Turkish **towels**, from £18, Christy. Bain Douche **bath and shower gel** with Essential Oils, £12; **nail brush**, £4, all Workshop Living. Bamboo **toothbrush**, £5.25, Violet & Percy. Enamel **tumbler**, £6, Fable. **Curtain**, Calling Birds, £55 m, Louise Body. Korken **bottle** with stopper, £2.25, Ikea.

### Sleep and dream

Hamilton double **bed**, £294 (base), The Dormy House; **covered in**, Dot To Dot, col £55 m, Louise Body. Ellis Stripe **duvet cover**, col Duck Egg, £75; Oxford **pillowcase**, £17, both Fable at Bedeck. **Cushions** (from front): 1 Indian Diamond, col Rust, £45, Georgia Bosson at Quiirk. 2 Blue knitted, £25, John Lewis. 3 Ester, £28 m;

4 Blomma, £32 m, both Scion. 5 Loops **sham**, col Ochre, £20, Christy. Grey **throw**, £99, John Lewis. Chunky knit **throw**, col Multi Reds, £25, Tesco Direct. Alexa reclaimed wood **bedside table**, £359, West Elm. (On table) Copper honeycomb **tumbler**, £6; copper honeycomb **carafe**, £26, both Oliver Bonas. Wild Plum **candle**, £17.50, Fable. Copper bud **vase**, £40, Cox & Cox. Vintage effect **alarm clock**, £12, Sainsbury's. Terracotta **mug**, col Half Green, £14, Fable. Burnished copper bud **vase**, £40 for 3, Cox & Cox. (On wall) Paper bird **bunting**, £7, Fable. Madiba rustic **picture frames**, from £12.95, Dassie. Tapestry **hoop**, from a selection, Hobbycraft; **fabric** stretched over it, Calling Birds, £55 m, Louise Body. Perfect Symmetry **rug**, £398, Anthropologie. Fowey **pendant light**, similar from Rowen & Wren. **Curtain**, as before.



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*Prepare your produce  
with the right kit*



## VIDEO

For more great shopping ideas,  
go to  
[country-days.co.uk](http://country-days.co.uk)

**Find your favourite recipes and gather together all the country-style kitchen utensils and accessories you need to wash, peel, de-stone and chop your ingredients ready for a delicious batch of homemade jams and chutneys.**

Small wooden **chopping board**, £69; Opinel **vegetable knife**, £55 (from a set of 4 assorted kitchen essentials), both Summerill & Bishop. Pink **knife**, from a selection, TK Maxx. Wiltshire print **napkin**, £39.95 for 4, Liberty. **Colander**, £15, Nigella Lawson at Unique & Unity. Strawberry Fields **tea towel**, £8, Fiona Willis Artwork. Oval wire **basket**, £16.50, The Orchard. **Book stand** (with matching cake stand, not shown), £14.99, Heart of House. Condiments **greeting card**, £2.75, Victoria Eggs. Kilner Fruit Blossom adhesive **labels**, £2.50 for 24 assorted, John Lewis.



#### **1 Cut and core tasty homegrown apples.**

Apple corer, £7, Garden Trading.

## **2 Protect your clothes from splashes**

**and stains.** Wiltshire print PVC apron, £19.95, Liberty.

**3 Display seasonal ceramics.** Ashby medium apple ornament, col White, £6, Neptune.

**4 & 5 Rinse your homegrown produce thoroughly.** XL colander, £59, Summerill & Bishop. Small colander, £16, Willow & Stone

**6 Squeeze with ease.** Citrus juicer. £12.95.

Summerill & Bishop.

#### **7 Peel and slice in an instant.**

**8 Feel the love when prepping yo**

Loaf & Larder at T&G Woodware.

#### **9 Choose rustic everyday accessories.**

Opinel wooden vegetable peeler, £55  
(from a set of 4 assorted kitchen essentials),  
Summerhill & Bishop.

**10 Pick on-trend peachy tones for kitchen equipment.** Coral vegetable peeler, £11, Caroline McGrath

**11 Keep sugar to hand in stylish canister**

**12 Wash and dry up as you go:** Wiltshire

### **13 Add a pop of colour on the table top**

Cotton placemat, col Peach, £18.95 for 2,  
No. 1111

board, col Grey, £21.50, Nordic House

**15 Keep with the autumn fruits theme with this handy gadget.** Apple slicer and

**16 Wash berries in a charming cream ceramic container.** Rinse colander, £30. Habitat

### **17 Chop with care on a classic oak board**

Small handled board, £12.99, Loaf & Larder at T&G Woodware.

#### **18 Expertly pare your ingredients.** Opine

paring knife, £55 (from a set of 4 assorted kitchen essentials), Summerill & Bishop.

**19 Get straight to the core with a simple old-school utensil.** Retro kitchen apple

## Bubble and stir with classic cookware



Use a timer and thermometer to ensure your preserves are cooked to perfection. Check the consistency with the handy plate test: place a teaspoon of jam on a chilled plate and push your finger through once it's reached room temperature to see if it wrinkles. If it does, it's ready. Turn off the heat while you check, so it doesn't overcook.

**Maslin pan**, 9L, £48, David Mellor. Beech preserve **spoon**, £5.99; Ribbed glass **jar**, £4.99, both T&G Woodware. Bloomingville kitchen **scales**, col Rose Pink, £45, House Envy. Medium Weck Deco **jar**, £4.85, The Cooks Kitchen. Beech **board**, £40, Folklore. Kilner **thermometer**, £14, John Lewis. Red Apples **napkin**, £2.50 for 20, Dotcomgiftshop. Wiltshire print **side plate**, £16.95, Liberty. Vintage silver-plated **teaspoon**, £17 for 4, Caroline McGrath.



**1, 2, 3 & 4 Choose the right spoon for the job.**

(From left) Rig Tig white oak spoon, £10.95, Hus & Hem. Dipped wooden spoon, £7.50, Rose & Grey. Large wooden spoon, £28, Summerhill & Bishop. Kilner jam spoon, £5.99, John Lewis.

**5 Brighten up your kitchen.** Cotton placemat, col Coral, £18.95 for 2, Nordic House.

**6 Include ceramic fruit in your kitchen décor.** Ashby medium pear ornament, col Pebble Grey, £6, Neptune.

**7 Cook up a treat with coloured cookware.**

Malone casserole pot, col Grey, £55, Habitat.

**8 Remove pips and stones.** Dexam sieve, £8, John Lewis.

**9 Pause between stirrings without leaving sticky surfaces.** White porcelain spoon rest, £9, Willow & Stone.

**10 Add a pinch of spice and seasoning.**

Gold spoons, small, £7; large, £10, both Caroline McGrath.

**11 Weigh out your ingredients.** Scales (with measuring pan, not shown), £55, Cox & Cox.

**12 & 13 Carry pans safely from the stove.**

Wiltshire print pot holder, £12.95, Liberty. Apples oven mitt, £3.95, Dotcomgiftshop.

**14 Deal with a glut of produce.** Copper preserving pan, 10L, £185, Mauviel M'passion at Divertimenti.

**15 Handle small measures.** Rig Tig white oak syrup spoon, £5.95, Hus & Hem.

**16 Mix and blend ingredients.** Beech wood preserving spoon, £4, Garden Trading.

**17 Get to grips with colour.** Spoon with orange handle, £4.75 for 3 assorted, T&G Woodware.

**18 Prepare fruits ready for stewing.** Mixing bowl, col Shutter Blue, £13.50, Garden Trading.

**19 Pick an on-trend print in autumnal tones.** Klippan Autumn Berries fabric, £22.50 m, Hus & Hem.

**20 Use beautifully designed dining accessories.** Scalloped charger, £9, House Envy.

**21 & 22 Time each recipe to perfection.**

Retro pink timer, £12.50, Summerhill & Bishop. Hourglass, £25 for 2, Cox & Cox.

**23 Avoid messy drips when decanting into jars.** Jam funnel, £9.80, David Mellor.

**24 Be sure to test the temperature of the jam.** Thermometer, £2.28, The Cooks Kitchen.

**25 Arrange fruit in simple Scandi-style bowls.**

Limed wooden bowl, £21, Nordic House.

**26 Achieve a smooth consistency.** Muslin squares, 45cm, £3.99 for 5, Lakeland. ▶

## *Decorate jam jars and label with love*



Fill sterilised decorative jars with jewel-coloured preserves or dress up traditional-style Kilner jars with hand-stamped labels, pretty fabric tops and twine. Store in the pantry for a year-round taste of summer or share with family and friends as homemade foodie gifts.

100% Homemade **jar**, £10.50 for 4, Garden Trading. 'Delicious Jam' **jar**, £2.45, All Things Brighton Beautiful. Jam pot **rack**, £9, Dibor. Pear preserve **jar**, £20, Bliss in the Woods at Unique & Unity. Orange spotty jam jar **cover**, £3 for 5, Berry Red. Pink **tag**, £2.49 for 10; **hessian square**, £5.99 for 10, both Ginger Ray. Baker's **twine**, £5.95, Papermash. Brass Apple **napkin ring**, £28 for 4, Amara at Rowen & Wren. Jam jar **covers** in Klippan Autumn Berries, £22.50 m, Hus & Hem. Polka-dot jam jar **cover** (from a 73-piece label set), £7.99, Kilner.

## Shopping shortlist



- 1 Line your larder with charming jars.** Large ceramic jar with red lid, £6.95, Dotcomgiftshop.  
**2 Pretty up plain pots.** Gingham jam jar cover, £3 for 5, Berry Red.  
**3 Label with beautiful hand-drawn designs.** Strawberry jam labels, jam tops and raffia ties, £4 for 6 of each, Fiona Willis Artwork.  
**4 & 24 Colour up the counter.** Placemats, cols Peach, Coral, both £18.95 for 2, Nordic House.  
**5 Tie on tags.** Kraft labels, £2.50 for 10, Paperchase.  
**6 Leave your mark.** Stamp, £24.95, StompStamps.  
**7 Record the date.** Date stamp, £5.95, Papermash.  
**8 Give the Home Made seal of approval.** Jam jar covers, £4.95 for 24, Divertimenti.  
**9 Pep up with a dash of spice.** Spice jar and spoon, £3.95, Rose & Grey.  
**10 Decant into an elegant glass pot to serve.** Ceramic jam jar, £48.50, Summerill & Bishop.

- 11 Label the jar.** Baker's twine, £5.95, Papermash.  
**12 Seal with a fruity design.** Wax seal stamp, £14.95; Waxes, £3.45 each, Sophia Victoria Joy.  
**13 Decorate with berry prints.** Blossom jar seals, £5.99 for 108; Fruit Jam labels, £2.50 for 24, all Kilner at John Lewis.  
**14 Make your own fabric covers.** Klippan Autumn Berries, £22.50 m, Hus & Hem.  
**15 Add a tag.** Label, £2.49 for 10, Ginger Ray.  
**16 Write your own.** Chalkboard labels, £3.79 for 24, Lakeland.  
**17 Try a bird print.** Pantry Design lid covers (part of jam-making set), £9.95, Dotcomgiftshop.  
**18 Cover jars with rustic fabric tops.** Hessian squares, £5.99 for 10, Ginger Ray.  
**19 Make each jar personal.** Tag, from £11 for 10; Oval kitchen labels, from £5 for 10; Large labels, from £5 for 10, all Honey Tree Publishing.

- 20 Carry in style.** Crate, £15.99, T&G Woodware.  
**21 Use a pretty jar.** (Top row) 'Delicious Jam' jar, £2.45, All Things Brighton Beautiful. Ceramic jar with pink lid, £6, Posh Totty Designs. Glass jar, £7.50, Folklore. Spoon, £7.95, Summerill & Bishop. Medium ceramic-top jar, £2.95; (Middle row) Small ceramic-top jar, £1.95; Gingham Jam pot, from a selection, all Dotcomgiftshop. Weck Decojar, £4.85, The Cooks Kitchen. Ceramic jar with red lid, £6, Posh Totty Designs. Pantry Design jar, £1.95, Dotcomgiftshop. (Bottom row) 'Perfectly Pickled' jar, £2.45, All Things Brighton Beautiful. Weck Storage jar, £7.50, Folklore. Jar with red lid, £4.95, Summerill & Bishop. Kilner Vintage preserve jar, £3.50, The Cooks Kitchen.  
**22 Get crafty.** Washi tape, £3 for 4, Paperchase.  
**23 Secure labels with jolly stripes.** Red and white stripe ribbon, £1.75 for 2 m, Paperchase.

# Holiday memories

PRESERVE REMINDERS OF GOOD TIMES - FROM GETAWAYS  
TO SPECIAL EVENTS - WITH THESE SIMPLE DISPLAY IDEAS



1.  
Twist wire into  
picture holders

Get creative

2.  
Create a beautiful  
scrapbook



Style idea  
\*

If including some pressed  
flowers or foliage in the  
scrapbook, interleave the  
pages with sheets of  
blotting paper. »

\*

3.

Display snaps  
in a tin box



Style idea  
\* \*

Press individual flowers  
from table arrangements  
and bouquets to mount  
alongside photographs  
of a wedding or party.



4. Make picture paperweights

## Capture precious moments



In this digital age, there's still a place for tangible displays of photographs and mementos as a reminder of happy times.

\* Sort photographs and memorabilia into themes to create eye-catching displays.

\* Add natural finds – such as pretty feathers, seashells, flowers or leaves – to introduce a sense of the time of year.

\* Write or print out words, meaningful quotes, mottoes, lines of verse or lyrics to bring a personal touch to your display.

\* Search online for the latest ways to display and print photos, including photobooks, posters, extra-large prints and items such as key rings, mugs and calendars, which also make great gifts.

\* For more ideas, see the printing options at Photobox, 0344 854 3366 photobox.co.uk, and Snapfish, 020 3684 7993, snapfish.co.uk. »



5. Mark memories on a map



## Get creative

# How to make it...

### 1 Twist wire into picture holders

Craft quick and easy photo holders from lengths of garden wire and chunky pebbles. Wearing protective gloves, take a length of garden wire (about 50cm) and wrap half of it around a large pebble as if tying a parcel, twisting the short end with the remaining half length to secure (see picture). Pull the top half of the wire taut then wrap the end down and around a piece of 2cm dowel or the handle of a large wooden spoon. Wind it around about three times to make three loops, and twist the bottom end of

the wire around the straight wire, pressing the loops together to make a tight clip for photos.  
**Pebbles, wire**, similar from garden centres.



### 4 Make picture paperweights

Capture magic moments forever in a glass paperweight. Most paperweight kits comprise a glass shape with a self-adhesive cover on the base. Using the base as a guide, cut out images from photographs just slightly smaller than the guide. Peel back the cover, position the image and replace the cover to seal the edges.

\*Tip Use photographs, postcards, flyers or any attractive paper memorabilia in paperweights and display groups of them in printers' trays on a wall or along shelves.



Glass **paperweights**, all similar from Fred Aldous. Sparkly **jute**, £6.48 for a bobbin, Nkuku. Colouring **pencils**, £2.50 for 24; **notebooks** and **stationery**, from a selection, all Paperchase.

### 2 Create a beautiful scrapbook

Record a journey or day out in the form of sketches, images and finds in a ring-bound scrapbook (using a scrapbook with ties will keep mounted items extra secure). Cut out and mount drawings and rubbings onto decorative cards and paper trimmed to fit a space in the scrapbook. Dot the corners of the back of the artwork with glue, then press onto their backing cards. When dry, stick the cards onto the pages using a glue stick or sticky tape. Glue pressed flowers onto the pages if using.



Kraft **scrapbook**, £8.50, Paperchase. **Cards**, similar from Hobbycraft. **Tape**, £3.50 for 3 rolls, Hobbycraft. Hessian **ribbon**, similar from Not on the High Street. Other items, stylist's own.

### 3 Display snaps in a tin box

Keep mementos of a special party in a hinged sweet or biscuit tin. Fill the base of the tin with layers of 5mm foam board trimmed to fit: using a hot glue gun, stick enough layers together to fill the tin to within 1cm of the rim. Cut out and glue down a layer of corrugated card over the foam board and also line the lid of the tin with card. Pin two lengths of paper string like washing lines across the base of the tin (see picture) and use mini pegs to clip on photographs. Use place cards, ribbon and flowers to decorate inside the lid.



Corrugated **card**, £1.80 a sheet; **foam board** from 99p a sheet, both Fred Aldous. **Pegs**, £1 for 50; **pins**, £2.50 for 100, both Hobbycraft. **String**, £2.50 for 30 m, Willow & Stone. Pressed **flowers**, similar from Avonside Flowers.

### 5 Mark memories on a map

Annotate a map with happy reminders of fun trips. Take a box frame apart, then glue a map of your journey to the backing board. Print or write dates or days on slips of paper to fit mini clipboards, and use a hot glue gun to fix them to the map. Draw picnic, campsite or hotel symbols or print free images from websites such as Clipart (openclipart.org) onto card, and cut out or punch luggage tag shapes then glue onto the map along with photographs. Add words in wooden letter tags or try Scrabble tiles.



**Frame**, £10; **clipboards**, £1.49 for 2; **alphabet tags**, £2.79 for 52; **card tags** made using multipunch, £11.25, all Hobbycraft. **Map**, from £4.99, Stanfords. **Tealights**, £4.59 each; **bottles**, £29.95 for 4; **bird**, £5.95, all Nkuku.

### 6 Tuck treasures into envelopes

Make little books from bundles of handmade envelopes stuffed with used tickets, bus or rail timetables, postcards and other nostalgic travel trivia that you want to keep. Sort the items into themes and fill the envelopes, then write labels and fasten on with fancy paperclips. Collate several envelopes together with strips of decorative tape along the bottom edges (see picture). Add one final strip of tape down the finished spine to create a book.

\*Tip Tie the books with lengths of leather cord to keep contents safe.

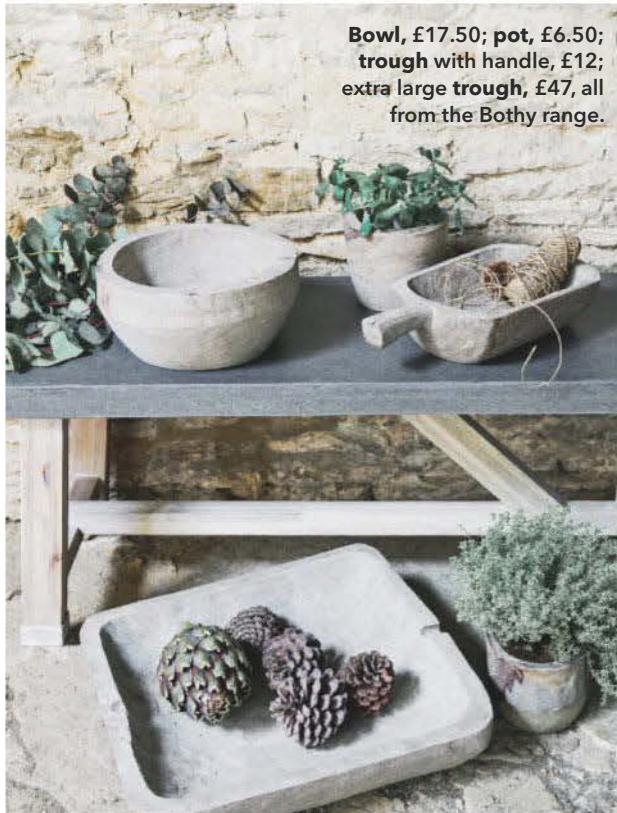


**Envelopes**, £8.15 for 20, Fred Aldous. **Paperclips; card; tape; fabric, all** similar from Hobbycraft. **Leather cord**, similar from John Lewis. Sparkly **jute**, £6.48, Nkuku. **Pen**, £24, Paperchase.

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# “Rural life has brought a new freedom to my book writing”

Novelist Freya North

After moving to Hertfordshire six years ago, the best-selling author Freya North converted a stable in her garden to write in, although when it's very hot she takes her laptop down to the woods to work. A born and bred townie, she has embraced country life and loves horse riding, walking her dogs, making jam and baking. In 2012, Freya set up and now runs the Hertford Children's Book Festival, she is also a judge for the Campaign to Protect Rural England's Rural Living Awards and an ambassador for Beating Bowel Cancer. Author of 14 books, her latest novel, *The Turning Point*, is out now...

**Where is home?** I wanted a period cottage, but I ended up with a 1970s bungalow set in 50 acres, half of which is woodland. I was able to redesign the property inside and out and now it is mostly open plan. I moved here from north London, where I'd lived my whole life, in the very cold winter of 2009 – the move made my childhood dream come true. My heart had always been in the country as I'd ridden horses from a young age and I was also close to my cousins who lived on the side of a mountain in Wales. I live here with my children Felix, 14, and Georgia, 12, plus English Pointer Twig, Cockapoo Bee and my horse Nathan.

#### **Describe your dream country home...**

A wonderful contradiction – I want privacy but it should also be lively with plenty of visitors. We are friendly with other families on our lane and weekends often have an



open-house feel. My home is in a half-acre meadow and although I've planted an orchard and hedgerow, there is no garden as such. I don't mind, however, because I have views across the fields to the woods. To keep a country home perfect, the utility/boot room is vital, although muddy dogs do have their own charm! And, of course, a cake in the oven or soup on the stove always makes a house homely.

#### **Your earliest countryside memories?**

My Aunty Sally lived down a steep rutted track on a hillside outside Crickhowell in »





Jam making (above) is a favourite activity in Freya's kitchen.



Freya with her dogs, Bee (left) and Twig, in the woods that form part of her property.

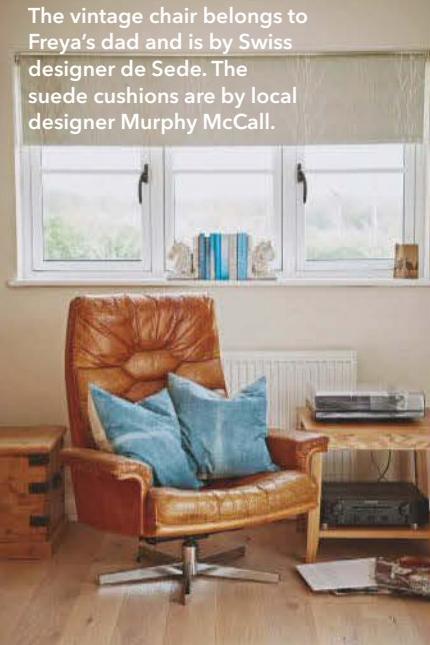


Lemon drizzle cake is Freya's signature bake.



Irish Sport horse  
Nathan is an important part of the family.

The vintage chair belongs to Freya's dad and is by Swiss designer de Sede. The suede cushions are by local designer Murphy McCall.



The 1970s bungalow has been reconfigured to create a modern open-plan home.



## My kind of country

Gwent and I loved spending time there. There were chickens, fat Welsh ponies, tearaway Jack Russells and eccentric locals. I remember parties in the hayloft and adventures on horseback.

**What inspires you most about living in the country?** I know it sounds strange but I feel rural life enables me to truly breathe. Life is more open – windows, doors, the view, the sky. I think the fact that I feel settled here and don't feel hemmed in has brought a freedom to my writing – be it edgier themes or deeper emotion and more complex characters.

**Favourite places to shop?** We are lucky to have good farm shops in the area. Foxholes Farm in Hertford is wonderful for locally reared meat and homegrown vegetables, plus an irresistible range of cheeses and British beer, cider and wine. For gifts, The Oak Room in the stable yard at historic Hatfield House is brilliant – really original, gorgeous items. They also have a shop in Hertford, where there is also a lovely Italian deli called Giambrone's.

**It is Sunday lunchtime where do you go to eat?** Our local is The Candlestick in Essendon, the perfect example of a friendly independent pub. It's got character and the menu is simple but delicious. Best of all, we can walk there through the fields and woods – there's even a tie-up for ponies.

**What's your favourite seasonal food?** When I moved here, I planted an orchard with 18 trees: apples, plums, damsons, greengages and quince. Last year's harvest was dreadful, but the year before I produced nine kilos of jam from one plum tree alone. In early summer I make a lot of elderflower cordial as it grows rampantly on the edge of our woods. By late summer, the kitchen is one big sticky enterprise of jam making. Guess what everyone gets for Christmas!

**How does your perfect weekend shape up?** The children are usually home from school by 5pm. From autumn to spring, the woodburner will be lit already; from spring to autumn, the French doors will be wide



Freya with Twig in the woods. The Candlestick (right) is a favourite place for Sunday lunch.



*“I couldn't live without...  
My woods – 24 acres  
where the children love  
to play. And my friends,  
I do feel blessed”*

### So Freya, in a nutshell...

**Favourite country scents...** Lilac in the spring, roses in the summer and daphne in the winter.

**Country moment...** We have buzzard families nesting in our woods and I love seeing them wheeling overhead and listening to their plaintive mewing.

**Dream garden...** I'm planning to build a kitchen garden with raised beds bordered with reclaimed bricks.

**Favourite thing...** Cutting the grass – it's perfect me-time.

open. Weekend mornings always start with a dog walk in the woods. If we have friends coming to visit, the dogs get two walks – one at the crack of dawn, then another later to the pub for lunch. In the summer, I might send the children off to bring up some kindling in preparation for winter. Saturday teatime, our neighbours usually pop in to see if I've made my legendary lemon drizzle cake. On Sunday evenings we have a TV supper while watching a film.

**Tell us a little bit about your latest novel...** *The Turning Point* is set in British Columbia and north Norfolk. Scott, a Canadian musician, meets Frankie, a British children's author. It's a book that explores falling in love a little later in life, about embracing the turning points we reach and accepting that fate can give with one hand and take with the other. It's a very emotional book about family, home and love, and I loved writing it.

**The Turning Point (£12.99, Harper Collins) is out now. Visit Freya's website freyanorth.com for more information.**



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IMPROVEMENTS

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1

Design  
a sociable  
kitchen

PROJECT  
2

Go for a  
wow-factor  
washstand

PROJECT  
3

Find the best  
extractor for  
your cooker

# SOCIABLE KITCHENS

**L**iving the open-plan dream often stems from a desire to spend more time at home with family and friends. The aim is to create a space that appeals to everyone and makes socialising easy. ‘For open-plan living to work, the room needs to perform a number of roles throughout the day, so the kitchen has to integrate with the dining and relaxing areas,’ says Andrew Hall, Managing Director, Woodstock Furniture.

Aim to zone the room into cooking, eating and relaxing, and then think about how you’ll move through the zones. Consider storage at each juncture for a clutter-free space where everyone wants to hang out and relax.

‘If space permits, I’d recommend incorporating a breakfast bar area for quick, informal snacks or homework monitoring, as well as a separate dining table for family meals,’ says Andrew.

A soft-seating area, perhaps with a sofa, television or hearth, will help make the kitchen a tempting destination outside of mealtimes. Those with less space will need to be creative. A small bay window can be all you need to enjoy comfortable seating, while built-in bench seats can create space for a table without blocking walkways.

## Store more

‘As well as being the natural hub of a large kitchen, an island unit that spans almost the full width of the room provides plenty of space for a breakfast bar,’ says Peter Humphrey, Design Director, Humphrey Munson. ‘Incorporate deep storage cupboards for holding tableware, so the table can be laid quickly and efficiently.’

## How can I include a breakfast bar?

Nickleby kitchens, from £30,000, Humphrey Munson.



1

*Tip*

If the breakfast bar is your only eating space in the kitchen, choose bar stools with comfortable backs and height-adjustable seats.



2

### Multi-tasker

'It only takes a small overhang on the worktop to make an island unit more sociable,' says Matthew Payne, Designer, Harvey Jones Kitchens. 'A 200mm-deep overhang will do, but aim for 300mm – the deepest you can have without needing extra support beneath the worktop.'

3

### Space-saver

This small circular breakfast bar perched on the corner of an island unit is a brilliant way to achieve a dedicated dining area without stealing precious prep space. 'The corner position is key, as it allows you to chat with family and friends, but still get on with the meal,' says Steven de Munnich, Design Director, Smallbone of Devizes.

**Pilaster kitchens, from £40,000, Smallbone of Devizes.**



4

### Embrace curves

'Curved cabinetry, such as this end-grain chopping board unit, is a great way of improving flow and movement in an open-plan kitchen,' says Richard Mason, Managing Director, The Secret Drawer. »

# What are the best looks for tables and chairs?

Artisan kitchens, from £25,000, John Lewis of Hungerford.

## Family hub

A central sturdy kitchen table is the traditional alternative to modern island units for food prep and socialising. 'Spread out the weekend newspapers, help with the children's homework, peel the spuds and share Sunday roasts – the kitchen table is where it all happens,' says Charlie Marshall, Founder, Loaf.

5

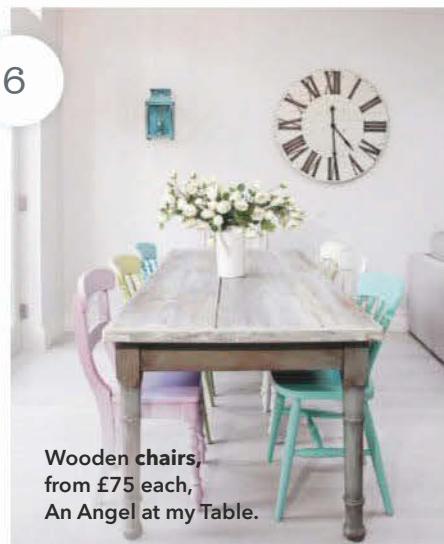


Billy kitchen table, £695, Loaf.

## Relaxed styling

'These deliberately mismatched chairs have been handpainted in pastel shades to create a laid-back dining area in this open-plan kitchen,' says Sophie Rogerson, Co-founder, RFR Interiors. 'We sourced the table from an antiques market – its timeworn, distressed finish is perfect for busy family life.'

6



Wooden chairs, from £75 each, An Angel at my Table.

Bespoke kitchens, from £36,000, Lewis Alderson.



7

## Tip

An extending table that can be pulled out when entertaining allows for more day-to-day living space.

## United front

'Commissioning dining furniture in the same style as the rest of your kitchen will help achieve cohesion throughout,' says Tom Edmonds, Director, Lewis Alderson. 'This kitchen leads into a conservatory, but we united the two spaces with a co-ordinating table and benches, achieving a more spacious feel.'





8

**Snug fit**

'Banquette-style dining is ideal for those who are pushed for space,' says Jayne Coleman, Kitchen Designer, John Lewis of Hungerford. 'Not only does it give you the option to conceal lift-up lids underneath the cushions to create valuable extra storage, but the banquette seats can be fitted flush to an island unit or wall, whatever its shape, leaving more floor space free in the rest of the room.'



9

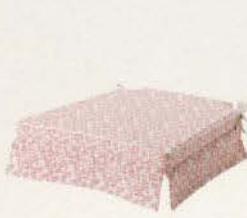
**Chic monochrome**

'Use black accents against fabric-covered chairs to create striking silhouettes in your dining area, without overpowering the space,' says Sara Thompson, Director, Thompson Clarke Interiors. Try a black factory-style pendant and a circular metal table teamed with seating dressed with crisp white cotton covers for a stylish look. »



**Game on**  
You don't need to be in with the shooting set to admire this feathered find.

• Pheasant, £16,  
Sophie Allport.



**Flip side**  
This floral pad has a check pattern on the reverse for a quick update.

• Elsebet, col Pink,  
£10, Ikea.



**Right stripes**  
The beach-hut vibe makes this pretty pad ideal for summer style.

• Henley, £26, Susie Watson Designs.

# ----- How can I make space for soft seating? -----

## Room with a view

'Maximise the potential of a bay window by incorporating a bespoke window seat,' says Andrew Hall, Managing Director, Woodstock Furniture. 'Topping it with an upholstered foam cushion helps to soften an open-plan kitchen, creating a more relaxed, living room feel.'

## Sun-seekers

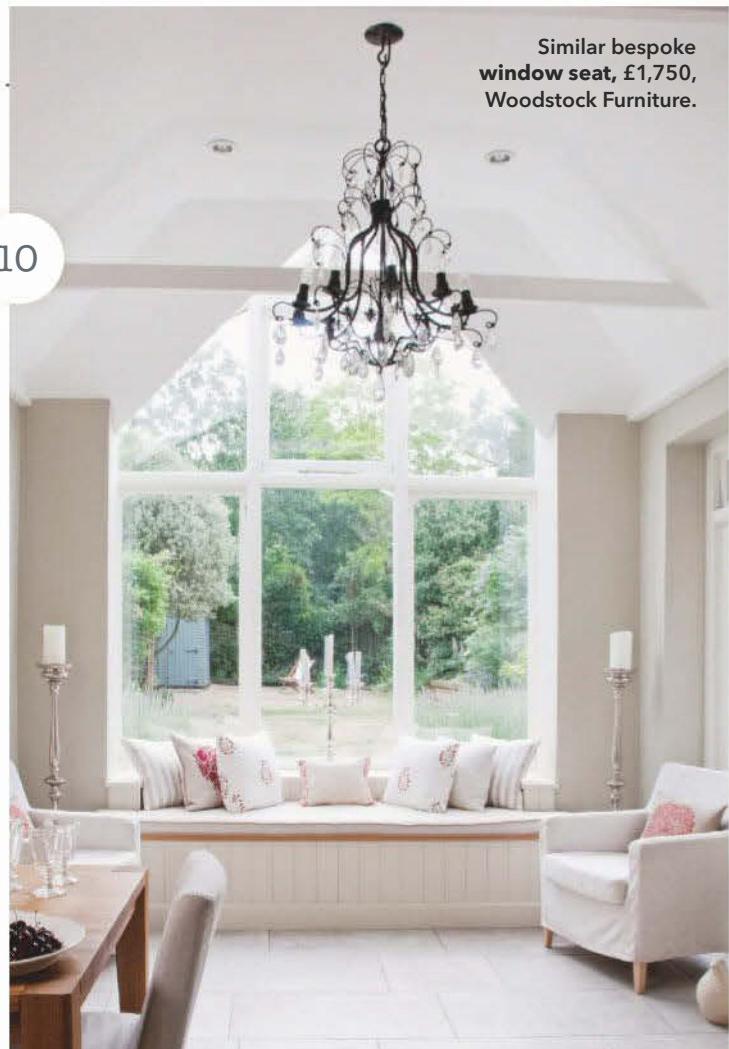
'For practical seating, choose covers that are removable and machine washable,' says interior designer Clare Topham of Clare Topham & Co Interior Design. 'Bear in mind that if the seating is in a conservatory, pale colours will be less prone to fading.'



11

**Similar covers,** Loose Fit Country sofa cover in Brera Quadretto, £629; Loose Fit Country armchair covers in Vreta Gingham, £149 each, Bemz.

10



Similar bespoke window seat, £1,750, Woodstock Furniture.

## Sofa style

Just one squidgy sofa is often all it takes to encourage friends and family to linger for longer in the kitchen. 'Comfort is the key – choose a deep seat for sinking into and add plenty of cushions,' says interior designer Emma Sims Hilditch, of Sims Hilditch Interior Design.

12



**Similar sofa,** the Bluebell, from £1,240, Sofa.com.

Vintage sofas that are a bit battered are great for low-maintenance kitchen seating.

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## PROJECT 2

# BATHROOMS

## How do I find a washstand with wow factor?

When selecting bathroom fittings, just as important as the basin itself is the cabinet or stand chosen for it. Classic washstands, rustic vanity units and elegant countertops are bringing a breath of fresh air to country bathrooms. 'After decades of somewhat sterile interiors, we are at last rediscovering the country house look and learning to create homes that comfortably combine new and old,' says Drummond Shaw, Chairman, Drummonds.

Traditional materials such as ceramic, wood and stone are still big news, but they're being

combined in inventive ways to create eclectic pieces; china basins can be supported by slender, barely-there metal legs or simple composite countertops, while stone bowls with natural variations in their markings sit on recycled wood cabinets. For a one-off piece, consider upcycling old furniture, setting a basin into a vintage chest or table and completing with a stone top.

Many designs also offer the benefit of extra storage, either in the form of shelves to hold stacks of towels or drawer or cupboard space for everyday essentials.

### French fancy

Sumptuously curvy, this beautiful oak washstand evokes a glamorous era.

Both wood and painted finishes are available and it can be topped with white and grey Arabascato marble (as shown) or black and gold Portoro marble, and completed with deck or splashback-mounted taps.



La Parisienne double vanity unit, £7,200; La Loire 3-hole basin mixer taps, £540 each, Catchpole & Rye.



Alimia bowl, £600; Whitechapel countertop, £700 for W120cm; Empire wall-mounted 3-hole basin mixer tap, £1,200, Fired Earth.

2

### Neat finish

Paring basin design down to a minimum simply adds to the charm. This simple stone and resin composite countertop, which is available in several sizes, puts the emphasis on the Carrara marble bowl. Taps in a vintage bronze finish are a welcome change from contemporary chrome.



Archer vanity top, £164; Archer Petite vanity unit, £435; Margaux mixer tap, £340, Kohler.

### Dark and handsome

A basket drawer brings a country element to this vanity unit. Made from maple, the furniture is finished in a dark shade and has a protective coating. The basin overhangs the vanity unit in a sweeping curve, creating a dramatic focal point.



#### 4 Smooth operator

Both classic lines and modern shapes are easy to achieve in a smooth-to-touch composite material of ground stone and resin. It is used here for the generously sized basin and the marble-effect countertop, supported by chrome legs. Polished nickel and gold-finish legs are also available. »

**Somerset basin, £499; leg set, £999; Bianco Carrara composite countertop, £599; Ellington wall-mounted basin mixer tap, £429, Bagnodesign.**

## 5 Stone age

Striking in colour, these sculpted basins are teamed with a unit made from reclaimed teak. Select doors and a stone top, as shown, or you can go for a slatted shelf or a rustic wood top.



**Teak double washstand**  
with doors and Royale marble top,  
£978; Bluestone Honed Venus  
basins, £354 each, Mandarin Stone.

## 6 Naturally dappled

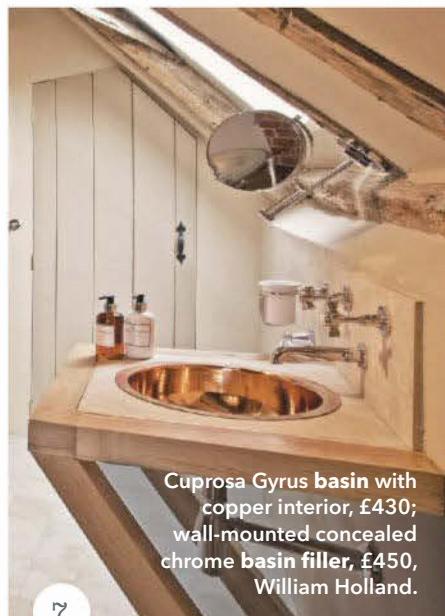
The beauty of a washstand top hewn from a slab of real marble is that every piece is uniquely patterned. Three types of marble are available for this design, which is fitted with an undermounted ceramic basin and completed with classic taps featuring extended spouts.



**Single Crake vanity basin**  
with shelf in Atlantic Grey  
marble, £4,860; Classic basin  
taps, £630, Drummonds.

## Tip

Check whether your chosen basin is pre-drilled for taps or designed for wall-mounted versions as this will affect where it can be positioned.



**Cuprosa Gyrus basin** with  
copper interior, £430;  
wall-mounted concealed  
chrome basin filler, £450,  
William Holland.

## 7 Shiny patina

Gleaming copper brings welcome warmth to this bathroom. Designed with a rim that allows it to slot neatly into a countertop, the basin is ideal for a bespoke treatment. Instead of sitting within a weighty cabinet, here it is fitted into a shelf, providing a quirky, individual look.

## PROJECT 3

# EXTRACTORS

What should I look for in a cooker hood?



The copper-trimmed hood is the crowning glory in a bespoke kitchen by Artichoke. Extractor, La Cornue.

An eyecatching extractor provides a stylish focal point in your kitchen. ‘A great extractor looks incredible, performs powerfully and works very quietly – it should be seen but not heard,’ says Owain Harrison, Marketing Director, Baumatic. **Extractors vary in shape and size**, but a good one makes the difference between a room that’s comfortably fresh and a steamy hot-house. It should change the volume of air in the kitchen at least 10 times an hour. **For safety**, unless the manufacturer advises otherwise, extractors should be positioned no lower than 75cm above a gas hob or 65cm above an electric hob.

**Models with classic styling** suit a country kitchen best, but can be difficult to find. Look for extractors designed to complement your cooker – many manufacturers offer matching hoods for a co-ordinated look. **An integrated extractor** fitted under a bespoke chimney or mantel is a discreet option that works well in a country kitchen.

FEATURE LINDA CLAYTON

1



### Best for... retro style

With its 1950s curves and an enamel-look ivory finish this chic extractor has a classic country feel. A cut-off timer lets you leave it running until the air is clear.

- **BER600IV Retro & Rustic extractor, H885-1,085xW600xD500mm, £359, Baumatic.**

2



### Best for... adding colour

The rounded-edge block shape of this high-spec hood looks stylish in soft Cameo Pink, shown. Low-level perimeter LEDs will illuminate the hob.

- **Faber Thalia extractor, H320xW600xD400mm, £1,139, KitchenEX Limited.**

3



### Best for... head room

The snug wall-mounted fit of this dynamic extractor prevents accidental bumps, while its sail-like upper duct glides up to capture steam during use.

- **HVS970B Décor hood, H990xW900xD441mm, £600, Hoover.**

4



### Best for... island units

This remote-controlled hood fits close to the ceiling to avoid obstructing sight lines above an island, only lowering towards the action when required.

- **Vesper extractor, H1,305x515mm diameter, £962, Rangemaster.**

5



### Best for... range cookers

The industrial design of this sturdy hood is ideal for professional-style range cookers, and its built-in steel splashback will keep walls protected.

- **Steel Ascot extractor, H500xW700-1,200xD500mm, £1,332, Bradshaw Appliances.**

6



### Best for... British design

Sebastian Conran is behind the Spitfire-inspired curves of this UK-made hood. Its built-in utensil rail will keep ladles and spatulas close to hand.

- **Sebastian Conran SCCHIM90 extractor, H850xW900xD480mm, from £489, Belling.**



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# The Country Decorator

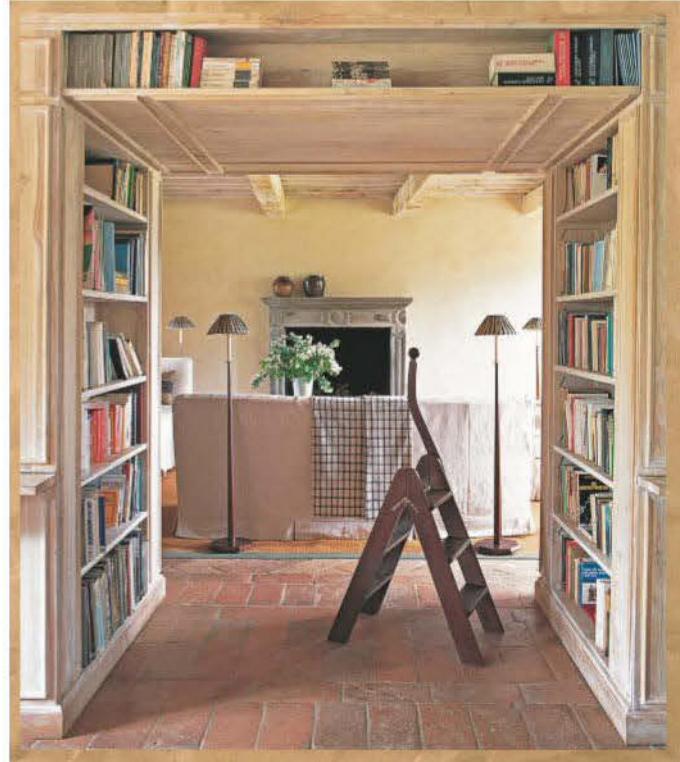
**Books** are beautiful objects and can make artful focal points when cleverly displayed. Be inspired by these creative ideas to make the most of your collection



*Paint shelving in the same colour as your walls for a seamless look*



**Go for multi-aperture shelving** Open shelving units with different-sized sections provide ideal book storage. Amanda Knox of Decorative Country Living suggests, ‘Theme books by colour or combine them with photos, artwork and keepsakes for added visual interest.’ Open shelving can also be a good room divider, offering a degree of intimacy that is less obvious than a solid wall.



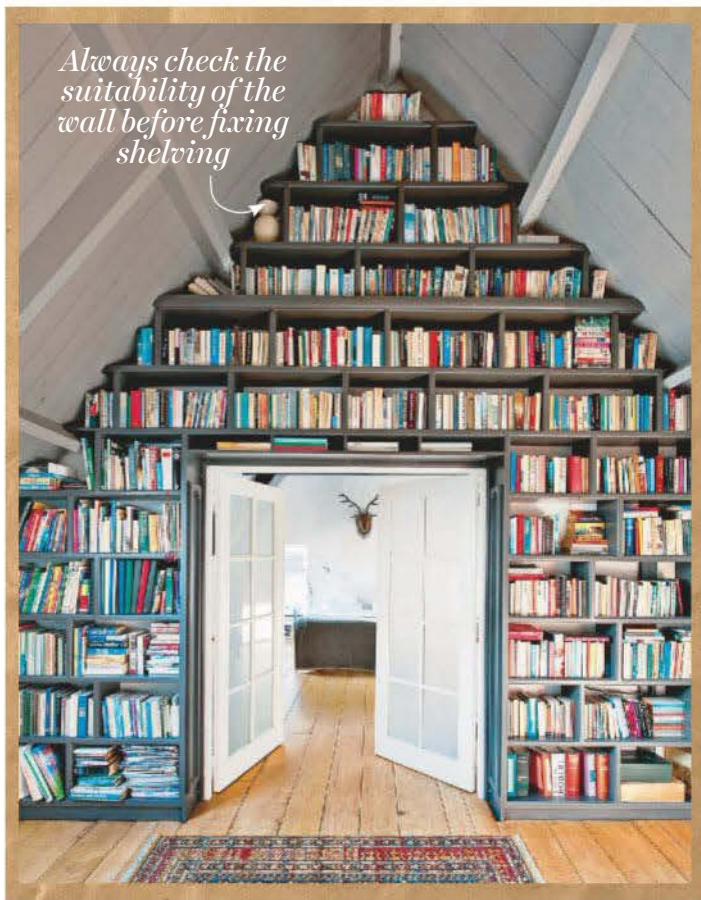
**Frame a walkway** Add personality to your room schemes by commissioning a carpenter to create a bespoke country-style bookcase to frame a deep walkway leading from one room to another. A library-style ladder adds a quirky touch and will make accessing books at a high level a breeze. Arabella Black of The Guild of Master Craftsmen advises, ‘Ask to see examples of a carpenter’s previous projects and, wherever possible, choose someone who is a member of a reputable trade association.’



*Protect your collection*

An elegant glass cabinet makes a dramatic storage statement and will keep your books free from dust and dirt. ‘Position out of direct sunlight, away from radiators and extremes of temperature or humidity to preserve their condition even further,’ recommends Tim Bryars of the Antiquarian Booksellers’ Association. »

## Design secrets



**Feature wall** Make a design statement with your books by choosing custom-built shelving to accommodate any shape or size of wall. This idea works particularly well in a room with a pitched roof, as the lateral shelf configuration will help to give the space the illusion of extended width, while also making a virtue of the shape.



### Pile your paperbacks

For optimum colour co-ordination in a pale room scheme, stack books in columns with the leaves of paper on show at the front and the brightly coloured spines hidden at the back. Try to make the piles using paperbacks of a similar size for further visual unity. To help you find the book you want, arrange the books alphabetically by title or author, or even create a crib sheet!



### Create a window display

Older country houses often have characterful little nooks and crannies located close to stairways, around window frames or above doorways. Make the most of every little bit of space by adding small inset shelves that are just wide enough to house a selection of books.

**“Tricks of the trade...”**  
If you love a neutral look in your home, cover colourful books with white or cream paper to create a uniform look

Joanna Wood, Interior Designer



**Make an entrance** If your home has a spacious hallway, you can easily turn it into a convenient place to store your book collection. Source traditional-style bookcases that suit the height of the doorway and then lend a sense of drama by painting the shelves in a contrasting shade to the rest of the space.

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14 September - 16 October 2015



Learn how to make your home look like the ones featured in your favourite homes magazines. Design Your Own Home will show you how celebrity designers and professional stylists work, while helping you to develop your own personal style.

You will be taken through the design process from initial concepts for a space to a completed scheme. Subjects covered include planning, colour, sourcing, textiles, lighting and accessories.

**Course costs £299**

**Normally £399 - save £100 when booking using code CHI0814<sup>†</sup>**

### Successful Gardens

2 November - 4 December 2015



Do you have a garden that you would like to develop, but are uncertain where to start? Would you like to gain ideas and inspiration on how to design your garden to achieve the look you've always wanted?

Successful Gardens gives students the specialist skills needed to transform an outside space. The course explores the use of plants, focusing on colour, texture and planting, while also giving advice on key garden accessories to help ensure a cohesive result.

**Course costs £299**

**Normally £399 - save £100 when booking using code CHI0814<sup>†</sup>**

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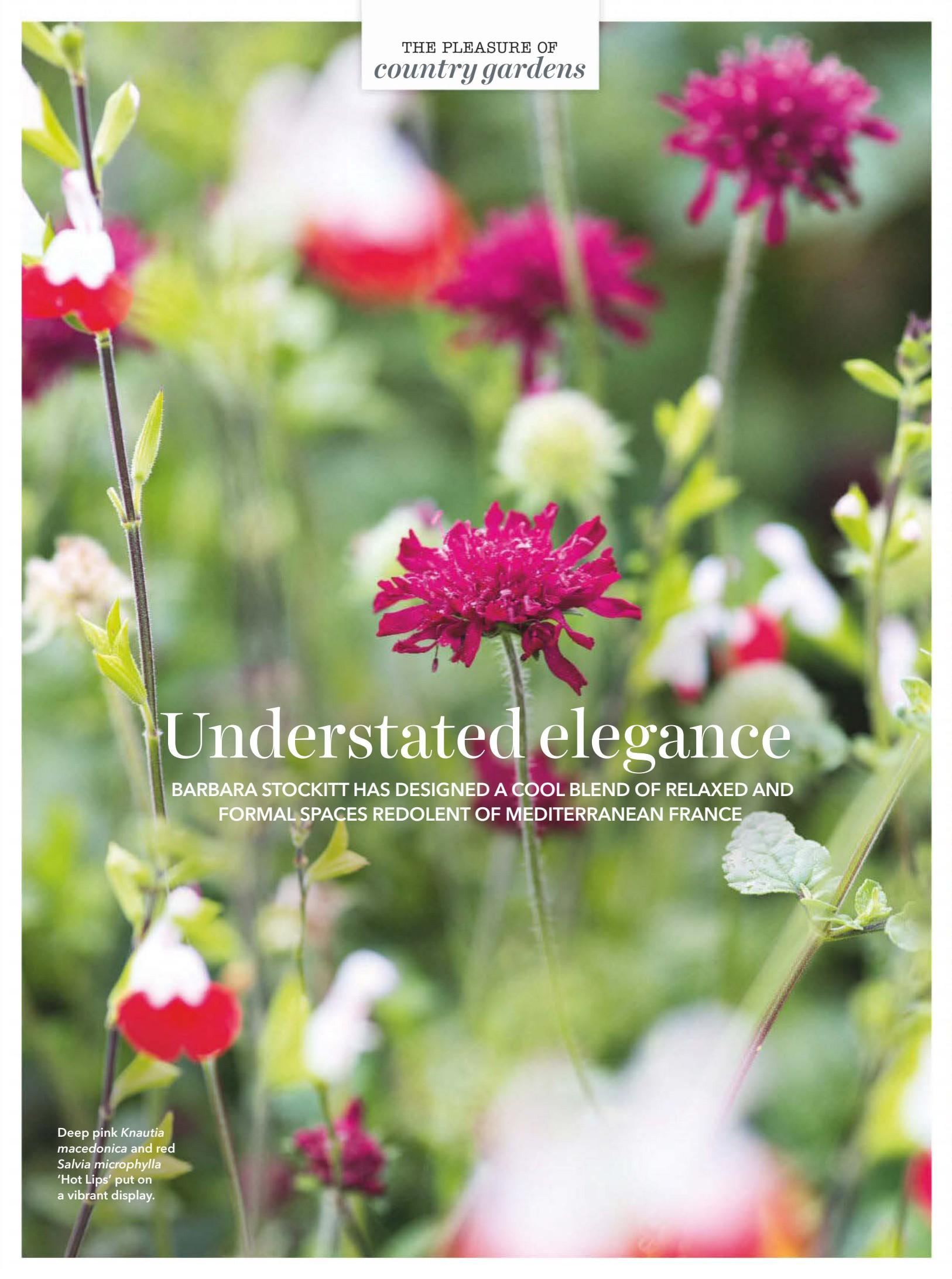
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THE PLEASURE OF  
*country gardens*



# Understated elegance

BARBARA STOCKITT HAS DESIGNED A COOL BLEND OF RELAXED AND FORMAL SPACES REDOLENT OF MEDITERRANEAN FRANCE

Deep pink *Knautia macedonica* and red *Salvia microphylla* 'Hot Lips' put on a vibrant display.



**The barn** The converted barn where Barbara and her husband Philip live is framed by orchard trees laden with rosy apples at this time of year. »



## At home with...

**Owners** Barbara and Philip Stockitt, who run The Classic Gardener nursery specialising in topiary and complementary pots.

**House** A converted threshing barn, dating from 1750, which was used as a café when Barbara and Philip lived in the big house next door and ran a wholesale nursery.

**Garden** An elegant formal garden, with a wide lawn, raised plant-packed beds and a French-style courtyard. The garden and its orchard are just under an acre.

*Six years ago, Barbara Stockitt* sold Pound Hill, the 16th-century Cotswold manor house in West Kington that had been her home for over four decades. With her husband, Philip, she had created an acclaimed two-acre garden and thriving wholesale plant nursery.

'To my surprise, the purchasers didn't want the barn and stables,' says Barbara. 'So we converted the barn – which had been the nursery café – into a new home.'

Their house and its garden of just under an acre have been skilfully designed. A tall yew hedge provides shelter from prevailing westerly winds, while Barbara's old garden, including an avenue of sweet chestnuts, which she planted, makes a mature backdrop to her new orchard.

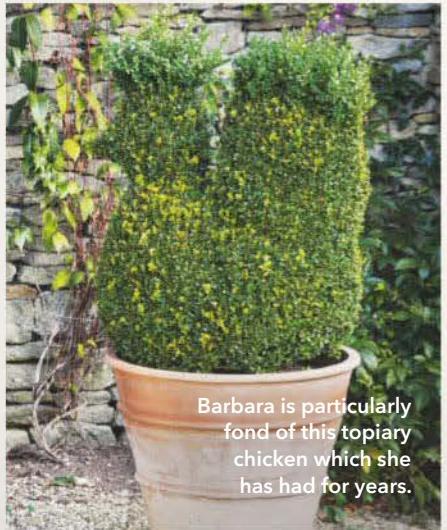
The barn, with its steep, pitched roofs and asymmetric windows and doors, is French in feel, as is the topiary yew and corkscrew box in Versailles tubs on the stone terrace. Yet, the garden is unmistakably English, in its plant-packed beds, formal rose border and Cotswold dry-stone walls.

The garden flows around the barn on three sides; on the fourth is an enclosed courtyard, as well as Barbara's new topiary nursery, The Classic Gardener. Throughout the garden there is a certain formal restraint, with yew hedges and groves of trees used as frames. A gravel drive swirls round an elliptical lawn to the front door, opposite which is a Lutyens bench, flanked by two large pots of immaculate *Hosta sieboldiana*, and by a grove of conical-shaped pear trees, *Pyrus calleryana* 'Chanticleer'. 'The pears produce lovely white flowers in spring,' says »

### Courtyard

Pleached hornbeams, set in low box hedging, create a shady area for a sunny day. Troughs of cosmos and pelargoniums (top right) and pots of agapanthus and *Melianthus major* (below, near right) add colour and form.

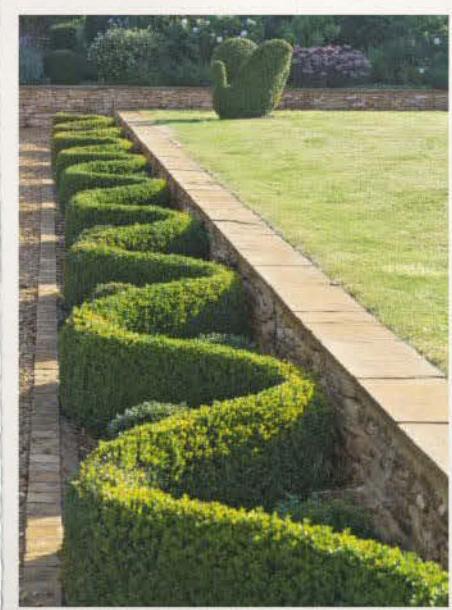
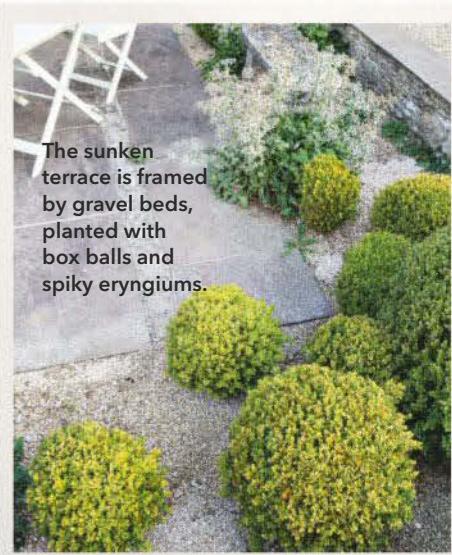
**Formal garden**  
(Below, far right) On several levels, this part of the garden has a clipped lawn edged by a winding serpent of box.



### *What makes this garden so special...*

'A gardener must get structure right before having fun with the planting.'

Then it's pretty simple and quite easy to look after'



*What we love most about this garden...  
‘The backdrop of orchard trees’*



**Raised borders**  
Flanking the lawn, these beds are planted in colour groups divided by clipped yew, which lends structure and formality to the scheme.



### Seating area

Barbara has created a seating area to the north of the barn, which she fills with pots overflowing with pretty pink pelargoniums and sweet-scented lilies.

Barbara, 'and the leaves don't come off until January, so it's almost like having evergreens.' This cool, composed scene is offset by a yellow rose, Malvern Hills ('Auscanary'), which rambles up a Cotswold stone wall above a flurry of nepeta.

The entrance to the main garden is flanked by 10 silver-trunked hawthorns, *Crataegus x lavalleei*, set in circles of stone and framing a stone bench. Steps lined with pots of dwarf agapanthus lead down through another yew hedge to a sunken stone terrace, where the Stockitts enjoy the evening sun. The Mediterranean-style terrace is planted with variously shaped roundels of box, with spiky eryngiums and self-seeded *Verbena bonariensis* drifting through gravel beds.

Stone piers lead out to the vegetable garden and orchard beyond, newly planted with apples, pears and mulberries. 'They are all grafted on dwarf root stock so I can reach and pick the fruit easily,' says Barbara.

The soil is brash, alkaline and with intermittent patches of clay and free-draining sand. 'It's an awful combination,' says Barbara, 'so we've imported good top soil and dug in masses of muck.' She waited a year for the weeds to come through in the raised beds around the lawn so that she could pull them out before she started planting. 'It took real patience, but it was worth it,' she says.

A yew-backed rose parterre is laid out within a diamond pattern of low box hedging, and with grey bursts of *Stachys byzantina* at the corners and box roundels at »

### Modern Country Classic

#### The 'designer' look

Put the emphasis on shape and form to get a sharp, sophisticated look...

#### Need to know...

- Write ideas on a plan to work towards a cohesive look. You can change it as you like until the look is harmonious.
- Topiary is important for structure, and to give a garden a feeling of permanence.
- Colour theming requires a lot of thought. Plant round evergreens to hold the design together.
- Don't ignore your garden, even for a week.
- Trial new plants in pots before placing in the garden.
- Be prepared to dig up anything at any time. Gardening is about change.



## On our doorstep...

**Visit...** 'Dyrham Park, near Bath (0117 937 2501, [nationaltrust.org.uk](http://nationaltrust.org.uk)). Late 17th-century house with deer parkland and formal gardens. Also, take a walk to Castle Combe along the floor of the river valley across the Fosse Way.'

**Stay at...** 'Calcot Manor, Tetbury (01666 890391, [calcotmanor.co.uk](http://calcotmanor.co.uk)). A luxurious hotel with spa and wonderful staff.'

**Go for a meal at...** 'The Brasserie at Lucknam Park Hotel, Colerne, Chippenham (01225 742777, [lucknampark.co.uk](http://lucknampark.co.uk)), in a 17th-century Palladian mansion with 500 acres.'

intervals along the front. Most of the roses are from David Austin, Barbara's brother, and range from pink Barbara Austin ('Austop') through cream to apricot and dark red 'William Lobb'.

Wall-backed beds are divided by colour and include the signature plant *Sedum 'Matrona'*, which gives interesting foliage contrast for much of the year, and climaxes in September. The red section features *Knautia macedonica*, *Crocosmia 'Lucifer'* and *Cotinus coggygria 'Royal Purple'*, while eupatorium, deutzia and honeysuckle are key plants in pink. *Osmanthus delavayi*, for scent and its evergreen nature, appears in the white section along with the repeat-flowering rose, Claire Austin ('Ausprior'), white stocks and leucanthemums.

On the fourth side of the house, the enclosed courtyard has seasonally planted pots. By late summer, these are filled with hydrangeas, pelargoniums, cosmos, agapanthus and argyranthemums. A square of pleached hornbeams standing in low box hedging is redolent of Mediterranean France, and an ideal place to sit on a hot summer's day.

Either there, or on the stone terrace outside the kitchen, Barbara can contemplate what she describes as 'a work in progress', and think about what to do next. 'That is the fun of it – all that tweaking,' she says.

**The Classic Gardener, Pound Barn, West Kington, Chippenham, Wiltshire SN14 7JQ, 01249 782781, [classicgardener.co.uk](http://classicgardener.co.uk).**

## Formal garden

Gravel paths surrounding the lawn lead through to the enclosed garden. As you'd expect from a topiary nursery, neatly clipped box mounds and more intricate shapes feature throughout.



### Barbara's late-summer lovelies

- 1 *Salvia microphylla* 'Hot Lips' flowers from early summer into autumn.
- 2 *Dahlia* 'Monk Marc' is long-flowering and one of Barbara's favourites.
- 3 Box (*Buxus sempervirens*) is a star in any type of garden.
- 4 *Sedum* 'Matrona' is a succulent with clusters of pink flowers in late summer.
- 5 *Cosmos* lends a burst of colour to the Mediterranean-style area.
- 6 *Rosa Claire Austin* ('Ausprior') is named after Barbara's niece.
- 7 This unknown deep pink hydrangea is key in the courtyard.
- 8 Also unknown, this agapanthus was picked up in a market in Italy.





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1



## Host a bulb planting day

Prep a village verge now for colourful spring blooms

- **Source suitable areas to plant** – contact your local council to find out who owns the land before you start and ask permission, or offer to tidy up front gardens belonging to the elderly or less able.
- **Pop flyers through neighbours' letterboxes** with a date and time.
- **Ask volunteers to bring** along gloves, trowels and watering cans on the day, as well as their favourite spring bulbs, such as daffodils, hyacinths and crocuses.
- **Sign up volunteers** who can help on a long-term basis.
- **Organise a neighbourhood walk** to admire new growth when spring arrives.
- **For more information** on how to look after your bulbs, visit [rhs.org.uk](http://rhs.org.uk).



## 2 Love layers!

Team cropped trousers with a lovely cardigan for the perfect balance between summer and autumn attire.

**Magpie cardigan**, £45; **Washing Rocks vest**, £19.95; **Lookout trousers**, £55, all Seasalt.



## 10 ways to Make life lovely

Fashion, wellbeing, eco, pets, travel and other nice things

4

## Snooze in style

Your dog will sleep soundly in this beautiful fleece-lined pet bed (from £60) by Emily Bond. Choose from a range of chic colourways in adorable designs inspired by Emily's pet Dachshunds, Oscar and George.

## 3 Raid nature's larder

No such thing as a free lunch? Think again! Download *The Forager's Apprentice*, 79p (iPhone or iPad) – it'll inform and inspire you on how to make the most of nature's bounty.



## 5 COOK AND CLEAN THE NATURAL WAY

From herbal honey to forest-fresh floor cleaner, *Forgotten Ways for Modern Days* by Rachelle Blondel (£14.99, Kyle Books) revives traditional household solutions, making the most of foraged finds and veg patch pickings. »

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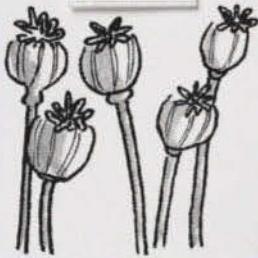
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6



### Go wild with... poppy seeds

Enjoy in homemade bread and cakes

- **Collect seeds** from dried pods - look for ones that have turned from green to brown, look wrinkly and feel leathery.
- **Snip pods into a paper bag** or tub and carefully shake out the seeds. Store in an airtight container until required.
- **Sprinkle seeds on top of home-baked** treats to add colour and crunch.

8

### Rehydrate summer skin

Treat sun-exposed skin to a moisturising mist



**1** With replenishing botanical ingredients and natural antioxidants, this fruity blend leaves skin feeling fresh. Pomegranate, Argan & Grapeseed Body Mist, £15 for 100ml, Crabtree & Evelyn.

**2** Soothe skin with a stress-relieving mix of rose, geranium and lavender. Hydrating Mist Toner, £17.50 for 100ml, Trilogy.

**3** Juice and salad recipes inspired the ingredient list of this cleansing toner. Toning Essence, £16 for 200ml, Temple Spa.

### 7 Buy British Wrought Iron and Brass Bed Company



Stephen and Amanda Oldfield set up the Wrought Iron and Brass Bed Company in 2005 after failing to find suitable iron beds for their sons, Jack and Harry. Ten years on and the family now specialise in designing and creating quality beds with a lifetime guarantee, each individually handcrafted by local craftsmen from a converted barn in Norfolk. We love the traditional Charlotte, left - available in a choice of sizes and colours, it's perfect for a country bedroom. Prices start from £550 for a single bed. Call 01485 542516, [wroughtironandbrassbed.co.uk](http://wroughtironandbrassbed.co.uk).



### 9 Rustic storage

Store your bits and bobs in The Basket Room's gorgeous range of ethical baskets, individually made by small craft collectives in Africa using age-old weaving techniques. Prices range from £9 for two small storage baskets to £55 for a bike basket. ➤

10

## Treetop hideaways

Get a weekend high at one of these cool timber retreats in woods and forests...



### LOST MEADOW TREEPOD BODMIN, CORNWALL

**We love it because...** It's spherical and sustainable. Suspended from cables 3m above the ground, it also has a ceiling window for stargazing.

**What's the accommodation like?** Scale the sturdy staircase to reach this room in the trees, clad in cedar shingle on the exterior. Inspired by early zeppelin engineering, the lightweight structure has minimal impact on the trees. There's a wood-burner, kitchen hut with fire circle below the tent, a ground-level hammock, plus a riverside 'living room' in a suntrap close by.

**How much?** From £95 a night. Minimum two-night stay. Sleeps two.

**Lost Meadow, 0117 204 7830, canopyandstars.co.uk.**

### BROCKLOCH TREEHOUSE

CASTLE DOUGLAS,  
DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY

**We love it because...** Tucked away in a pretty bluebell wood at Brockloch Farm, this modern eco-build, celebrates its surroundings. On sunny days, light pours in through many tiny windows; look back out for perfectly framed snapshots of the woodland outside. Skylights above the bed and bath allow stargazing.

**What's the accommodation like?** A kitchen, stylish living and dining area, and bathroom with compost loo are all fitted within this space, with sheep's wool insulation and a wood burner ensuring cosy nights, and solar panels add lighting.

**How much?** From £155 a night. Minimum two-night stay. Sleeps two.

**Brockloch Treehouse, 0117 204 7830, canopyandstars.co.uk.**



### PEN Y BRYN MACHYNLLETH, POWYS

**We love it because...** Set in a woodland site overlooking the Snowdonia Mountains, the latest addition to the Pen Y Bryn Living-Room treehouse collection provides a perfect base for exploring the Cambrian Mountains.

**What's the accommodation like?**

Six ancient oak trees cocoon this quirky treehouse high among the trees. The tranquil location is ideal for an über-chic stay. Designed with comfort in mind, the cosy treehouse is fitted with a wood-burning stove, hot shower and compost loo. It's located among a series of five treehouses, built on a 200-acre woodland site.

**How much?** From £379 for two nights. Sleeps up to five (two adults, three children).

**Pen Y Bryn, Living Room, 0117 204 7830, canopyandstars.co.uk.**



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**Lavender 'Hidcote'** An evergreen, aromatic semi-shrub with narrow, silver-grey leaves and leafless stems topped with purple-blue tubular flowers during summer. H60cm, spread 30cm.

### OR try these summer plants



#### Buddleia 'Buzz Velvet'

Butterflies love this aromatic plant, perfect for large patio pots and small gardens. Height and spread 120cm. Supplied as jumbo plug plants. Buy 1 for £8.99; or buy 2 for £11.98 or 4 for £17.98, saving half price.



**Star Jasmine** This fragrant climber bears masses of star-shaped flowers on twining woody stems, its glossy evergreen foliage forming a dramatic backdrop. H9m, spread 3m. Supplied as potted plants. Buy 1 for £13.99 or 2 for £18.99, saving £9.



**Lavatera 'Barnsley Baby'** A dwarf version of a cottage garden classic. Its pale pink saucer-shaped blooms attract bees and butterflies. H75cm, spread 60cm. Supplied as plug plants. Buy 1 plus 1 FREE for £9.98, or 2 plus 2 FREE for £15.98.

\*\*Calls cost 7p per minute plus your telephone provider's access charge. Offer subject to availability and available to readers with a UK address only. All orders by post will be acknowledged by letter or email. Orders despatched from August onwards. If you're not completely satisfied, please return goods within 7 days with a covering letter for a replacement or a refund (including initial postage). Please note, in the case of goods going missing in the post when returned, we regret that no refund can be guaranteed unless proof of postage is supplied. Please note your contract for supply of goods is with Thompson & Morgan, a company wholly independent of Country Homes & Interiors, published by Time Inc. (UK) Ltd. Country Homes & Interiors will collect your personal information to process your order and alert you of news, new products, services and offers available from Country Homes & Interiors and from Time Inc. (UK) Ltd by email, phone and post. You can unsubscribe from emails by clicking unsubscribe from within the email.

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Serve Apple Fizz in  
jam jars. See page  
121 for recipe.



## Celebrate the harvest

It's a time of plenty! Take the crops of the season and gather together on a golden day for a lunchtime of rich pleasures

**Good times, good food**

*Homemade crispbreads with  
goat's cheese and basil dip*

SERVES 6

*For the crispbreads*

**150g wholemeal flour**

**75g porridge oats**

**25g each sunflower seeds and pumpkin seeds**

**1 tbsp each sesame seeds and nigella seeds**

*For the dip*

**12g basil leaves, torn**

**100ml crème fraîche**

**150g Greek yogurt**

**½ tsp freshly grated black pepper**

**1 small garlic clove, crushed**

**150g goat's cheese, cut into 2cm cubes**

- 1 Preheat the oven to 170°C/Fan 150°C/Gas 3. Line a baking sheet with parchment. Put the flour, oats, sunflower and pumpkin seeds in a bowl. Add salt and stir. Add 125ml cold water and mix with a round-bladed knife. Form to a firm dough, adding a bit more water if lots of crumbs remain.
- 2 Shape the dough into a square and roll out to 25x15cm. Sprinkle with the sesame and nigella seeds and roll again until the seeds are pressed in the dough and it measures 35x20cm. Transfer to the parchment. Trim any ragged edges and cut dough lengthways, then widthways to make 12 rectangles. (Don't separate.) Bake for 25 minutes until lightly golden. Cool on a wire rack.
- 3 Mix dip ingredients in a bowl, adding sea salt if needed. Transfer to a serving bowl and serve with the crispbreads (if they soften during storage, re-crisp in a moderate oven for about 5 minutes).



*Homemade crispbreads with  
goat's cheese and basil dip*  
Head to the herb garden for the simplest of dips.





## *Baked ricotta with spinach*

A brilliant way to use a glut of the green stuff, this is a satisfying seasonal starter topped with nutty breadcrumbs.»

*Baked ricotta with spinach*

SERVES 6

**200g** spinach leaves, tough stalks removed  
**Plenty** of freshly grated nutmeg  
**250g** ricotta cheese  
**1** medium free-range egg  
**2** free-range egg yolks  
**300ml** single cream  
**100ml** milk  
**75g** freshly grated Parmesan cheese  
**Salt** and freshly ground black pepper  
**15g** butter  
**1** small red onion, roughly chopped  
**½ slice** crusty bread, cubed  
**Small handful** of pecan or walnuts, roughly chopped

- 1** Preheat the oven to 170°C/Fan 150°C/Gas 3. Put the spinach leaves in a heatproof bowl, cover with boiling water and leave to stand for 30 seconds. Drain thoroughly in a colander and divide among 6 individual shallow ovenproof dishes. Sprinkle with nutmeg and place the dishes on a large baking sheet.
- 2** Beat the ricotta in a bowl with the whole egg, egg yolks, cream, milk, Parmesan and a little salt and pepper. Spoon into the dishes, re-arranging the spinach, if necessary, so it's evenly spread through the sauce. Bake for 20 minutes or until lightly set around the edges but still very soft in the centres.
- 3** While the dish is in the oven, melt the butter in a small frying pan and gently fry the onion for 2 minutes. Add the bread and nuts, and fry for 1 minute more or until the mixture is beginning to brown. Scatter over each baked dish to serve.

*Honey and wine glazed pork skewers*

SERVES 6

**6** tbsp dry white wine  
**2** tbsp clear honey  
**1** tbsp thyme, finely chopped  
**2** tsp fennel seeds, crushed  
**4** whole star anise  
**2** garlic cloves, crushed  
**Sea salt** and freshly ground black pepper  
**1.5kg** skinned and boned pork shoulder, in one piece  
**Plenty** of thyme sprigs, to serve



- 1** Combine the wine, honey, thyme, fennel seeds, star anise, garlic and plenty of black pepper in a shallow dish into which the pork will fit quite snugly.
  - 2** Add the pork to the dish and turn in the marinade. Cover loosely with cling film and chill for several hours or overnight, turning once or twice.
  - 3** Preheat the oven to 220°C/Fan 200°C/Gas 7. Lift out the meat from the marinade and into a roasting tin. Roast for 30 minutes. Reduce the oven temperature to 150°C/Fan 130°C/Gas 2 and roast for a further 2½-3 hours until the meat is very tender. Leave to cool (see Cook's tip, below).
  - 4** Cut the pork into small cubes and thread onto metal or wooden skewers. Season with salt. Cook on a preheated griddle, grill or barbecue until crisped and very lightly charred. Scatter with the sprigs of thyme and serve with the Harvest Salad.
- Cook's tip** To save time, you can marinate and slow-cook the pork a day ahead and chill overnight. Make sure when you grill, griddle or barbecue the meat that it's piping hot right through when you serve. »



### *Honey and wine glazed pork skewers*

Marinated in a sweet and spicy sauce, then slow-roasted, this main dish simply melts in the mouth.

**Good times, good food**

## *Harvest salad with walnut dressing*

A colourful combination of leaves and roots makes  
the perfect side.



*Harvest salad with walnut dressing*

SERVES 6

**200g baby carrots, scrubbed and halved lengthways****1 tbsp olive oil****1 small fennel bulb, halved and thinly sliced****Leaves of several rosemary sprigs****¼ red cabbage, finely shredded****150g young spinach leaves****100g radishes, thinly sliced***For the dressing***4 tbsp olive oil****4 tbsp walnut or hazelnut oil****2-3 tbsp cider vinegar (enough to give a tangy flavour)****2 tsp maple syrup***To serve***50g pistachio nuts, roughly chopped if liked****Edible flowers such as courgette, squash or nasturtiums**

**1** Preheat the oven to 200°C/Fan 180°C/Gas 6. Put the carrots in a small roasting tin with a little pepper and drizzle with the oil. Stir to mix and cook for 15 minutes. Add the fennel and rosemary leaves to the pan, turning to combine with the carrots and cook for 10 minutes more until softened. Leave to cool.

*Apple fizz*

The ideal country tipple to accompany crispbreads and dip.

**2** For the dressing, mix together all the ingredients and season with plenty of salt and pepper.

**3** Combine the cooked carrots and fennel with the cabbage, spinach and radishes in a large salad bowl.

**4** Just before serving, add the dressing and stir well to mix. Sprinkle with the pistachio nuts and serve garnished with the edible flowers.

*Apple fizz*

SERVES 6

**1½ tbsp lemon or lime juice****½ tsp vanilla extract****1½ tbsp light muscovado sugar****400ml fresh apple juice****1 small red apple, cored and sliced as thinly as possible****Ice cubes****1 bottle sparkling wine, chilled**

Mix the lemon or lime juice, vanilla extract, sugar and apple juice in a jug. Pour into 6 glasses and add a few apple slices to each. To serve, add ice cubes and top up the glasses with sparkling wine.

**Cook's tip** For a truly rustic flavour, try to source the apples and apple juice from your nearest orchard. »

Good times, good food

## *Buttermilk and ginger cake with baked fruits*

A showstopping bundt topped with apricots, peaches and raspberries.





### *Orange and almond puff tarts*

These golden tarts taste divine and will fly off the plate. »

### Buttermilk and ginger cake with baked fruits

SERVES 8-10

**100g slightly salted butter, softened, plus extra for greasing**  
**175g light muscovado sugar**  
**2 pieces of stem ginger from a jar, finely chopped, plus 3 tbsp ginger syrup**  
**½ tsp ground cinnamon**  
**2 medium free-range eggs**  
**175ml buttermilk**  
**200g self-raising flour, plus extra for dusting**  
**1 tsp baking powder**  
*For the baked fruits*  
**6 apricots, halved and stoned**  
**2 peaches or nectarines, stoned and cut into wedges**  
**100g raspberries**  
**Small handful of mint leaves**  
**4 tbsp light muscovado sugar**  
**2 tsp lemon juice**  
**Dusting of icing sugar to serve**

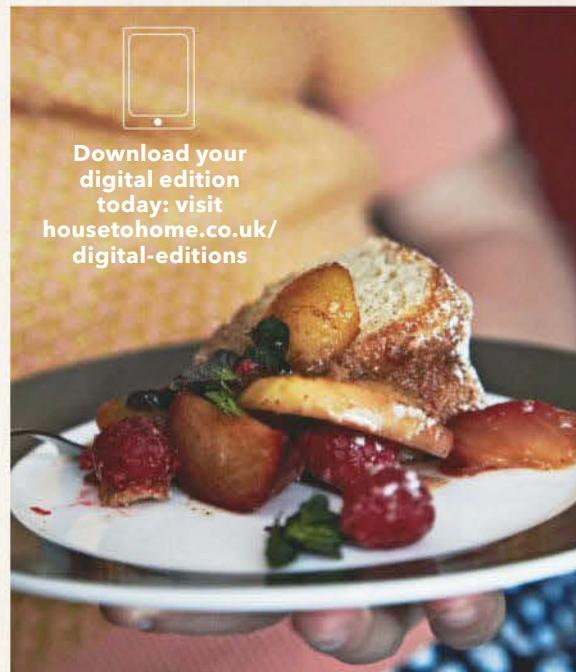
**1** Preheat the oven to 170°C/Fan 150°C/Gas 3. Grease a 1.2L ring tin and dust with flour. Beat the butter, sugar, ginger and cinnamon for about 5 minutes. Beat in the eggs one at a time. Stir in the buttermilk. Sift the flour and baking powder into the bowl and fold in.  
**2** Turn into the tin and level. Bake for 35 minutes or until firm. Loosen and turn out onto a rack to cool.  
**3** Turn up the oven to 220°C/Fan 200°C/Gas 6. Line a baking tray with parchment, arrange the stone fruits in a single layer and brush with a little ginger syrup. Bake for 15 minutes. Tip into a bowl with the cooking juices. Cool, then stir in the berries and mint.  
**4** Heat the sugar with 2 tbsp water until the sugar dissolves. Boil for 2 minutes to thicken slightly. Stir in the lemon juice and remaining ginger syrup. Cool.  
**5** Pour the syrup mix over the fruits, transfer the cake to a plate and pile the fruits in the centre.

### Orange and almond puff tarts

MAKES 12

*For the pastry*

**150g plain flour, plus extra for dusting**  
**100g slightly salted butter, chilled and diced**  
**1½ tsp lemon juice**  
*For the filling*  
**90g ground almonds**  
**40g caster sugar**  
**25g icing sugar, plus extra for dusting**



**Finely grated zest of 1 lemon**

**½ tsp almond extract**

**1 medium free-range egg, separated**

**4 tbsp orange curd**

**1** Put the flour in a bowl with the butter, stirring to coat. Add the juice and 75ml cold water and stir with a blunt knife, until the dough is soft. Add a drop more water if a lot of flour crumbs remain in the bowl.  
**2** Turn out onto a floured surface and roll out to 40x12cm. Fold the bottom third of the pastry up and the top third down, leaving a square of three layers. Press edges down with the side of your hand to seal. Give the pastry a quarter turn, then roll, fold and turn 3 more times. Wrap and chill for 30 minutes.  
**3** Preheat the oven to 200°C/Fan 180°C/Gas 6. Put the almonds, sugars, zest and almond extract in a bowl. Lightly beat the egg white. Add about 4 tsp of egg white to the almond mixture to form a firm paste.  
**4** Roll the pastry on a lightly floured surface to 3mm thick and cut 8cm rounds with a fluted pastry cutter. Press the rounds into the sections of a 12-hole bun tin, re-rolling the trimmings to fill all 12.  
**5** Roll the almond paste on a surface dusted with icing sugar and cut out 6cm rounds. Press these into the pastry cases, re-rolling the trimmings to make enough.  
**6** Put a scant tsp of orange curd in each pastry centre. Brush the top edges of the pastry with egg yolk, beaten lightly. Bake about 15-18 minutes until the pastries are pale golden. Leave for 10 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool. Dust with icing sugar to serve.

*Quinine* from the Congo



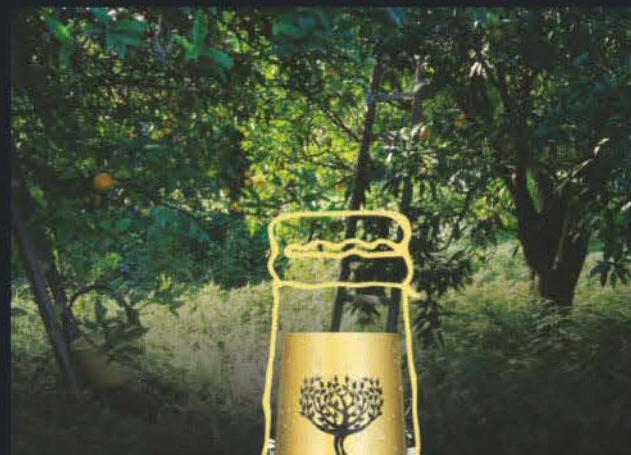
*Bitter Orange* from Tanzania



*Lemon Thyme* from Provence



*Lemons* from Sicily



# We Love Gin & Tonic

Love it a lot. Love it so much we were worried about it. We were worried the gin was being mistreated, being smothered with mainstream tonic that masks its delicate flavours with artificial sweeteners like sickly saccharin. Gin deserves better, we thought, so we started Fever-Tree. We personally went to the ends of the earth to find the best natural ingredients for a tonic water. Quinine from the Congo, bitter orange from Tanzania and subtle botanicals from Provence. The result is a tonic like no other, one that sets the complex flavours of gin free.

So, if *3/4* of your gin and tonic is tonic,  
make sure you use the best.

Charles & Tim  
Fever-Tree Co-Founders





*“Our business has evolved from a seed of an idea into the shop of our dreams”*

Vintage shop owners Chloe Shearing and Harriet Maxwell

Closet & Botts first opened its doors in February 2014 in the beautiful high street of Lewes, East Sussex, famous for its extensive array of antiques centres, independent shops and creative people. Standing proudly in a row of upscale shops, the new lifestyle store is a partnership between former school friends Chloe Shearing and Harriet Maxwell, and sells a fabulous combination of new and antique homewares, furniture and clothing.

Having their own shop was an idea Chloe and Harriet had aspired to since school days. ‘While at university we spent two weeks travelling together around France and Italy and chanced upon lots of amazing markets in those countries,’ says Harriet.

‘We realised that we both shared an intense passion for antiques and that was when the seed was sewn for starting a business together. Closet & Botts became our nicknames while travelling, and it stuck, and we have traded

as that ever since the business began. We like the name because it’s not too serious or girly.’

Post university, Chloe and Harriet wanted to gain commercial experience. Harriet worked as a display co-ordinator and merchandiser for Anthropologie in London, sourcing props regularly from national antiques fairs. Chloe, meanwhile, managed the Real Patisserie in Brighton, where she not only learned how to run a shop but her talents in fine art and textiles (the subjects she studied for her degree) helped to create enviable displays.

‘We visited France again on holiday and toured all the famous flea markets in Paris as well as going to the exquisite fashion and design store, Merci,’ says Chloe. ‘We were inspired and it reignited in us a desire for starting our own retail business.

‘Returning from France,’ she continues, ‘we went for it. We left our jobs on 1 June 2012, bought our van – The Pearly Queen – and began sourcing in France and Belgium. We »

**Chloe** (left) and **Harriet** are proud of their shop counter, a clever find at Ardingly Antiques Fair. Everything at Closet & Botts, from displays to packaging (opposite), has a traditional merchant feel.



didn't really know what we were doing but felt it was important to learn our trade.'

'We sold our wares at car boot sales, and then at larger national antiques fairs,' recalls Harriet, who takes up the story. 'For 18 months we built up a good customer base and started marketing ourselves on social media sites. We had no direct antiques knowledge but trusted our instincts for colour, shape and design. Getting up in the middle of the night to travel to fairs, battling the snow, buying in the dark and then setting up our own stand to sell, often in freezing conditions, was both grounding and a vital part of our own development.'

'We started the business with £300 each for stock and it has grown from there,' Chloe adds. 'I lived at home with my parents for the first two years and Harriet stayed in London with her boyfriend, working part-time. We didn't take any cash from the business, just ploughed it all back in. Starting with small items, we could gradually afford to buy larger furniture.'

In December 2013, a friend of Harriet's mum noticed that the old pharmacy in Lewes was available to rent and Harriet and Chloe went to view it. 'The shop had everything we could have hoped for: lots of passing trade, beautiful double-fronted windows with stained glass

## *What we love most...*

Experiencing the journey of an item we have sourced, merchandised, sold and then viewed in a customer's home is so rewarding

along the tops – ideal for display – old wooden floorboards throughout, original fireplaces and, at the back, gorgeous French doors leading to a pretty walled garden,' says Harriet.

'We scraped together enough money for the lease and opened three weeks later! We have never worked so hard, preparing the shop and sourcing more stock,' says Chloe. 'By the next September we were ready and stocked for our first Christmas, which proved a great success.'

Despite not intending to open a shop when they did, the serendipitous find felt right. Chloe commutes across from nearby Brighton and Harriet, having commuted from London since opening, is now expecting a baby and moving to Lewes with her partner. 'We have a strong local support network of family and friends, which has really helped us,' says Harriet.

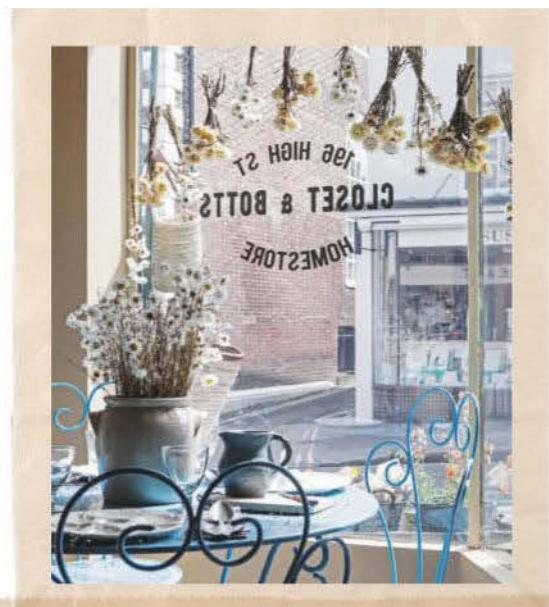
Both Chloe and Harriet have an eye for detail, resulting in an artfully chic shopping experience that exudes old-fashioned merchant style but with contemporary charm. The striking counter, originally from a French shop, that greets you as you walk in provides a clear nod to the past, but as you wander through the store, with its seamless mix of antique, new and handmade, the aesthetic is lighter and more airy. 'We wanted to create a visually interesting space and our products are presented in settings that you can imagine in your own home,' says Harriet. 'Displays are changed weekly to inspire fresh ideas.'

The effervescent duo has also just launched a new online shop. 'This is the next stage for us and we are keen to take our wares to a larger audience,' explains Chloe. 'We have a huge sense of pride, knowing that we started from very humble beginnings and are now able to curate our own space with pieces we love in the way that we want. Our family and customers have been amazing in their support and we are very grateful to them.'

**• Closet & Botts, 196 High Street, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2NS, 01273 945398, [closetandbotts.com](http://closetandbotts.com). »**



A happy customer will be back. The wall panels are old pallets that Harriet and Chloe sanded and stained to look antique.





Loved by visitors for its antiques shops and cafés, Lewes is perfect for a sunny Sunday stroll. Although Harriet and Chloe usually source in Europe and at large national fairs, they also support local dealers at Lewes Flea Market .

### On our doorstep...

**Visit...** 'Charleston (01323 811626, [charleston.org.uk](http://charleston.org.uk)). The country home of leading members of the Bloomsbury Group, it's inspirational for us both. The colourful style in the house and garden chimes with the Closet & Botts aesthetic.'

**Shop at...** 'Freight (07470 023281, [freightstore.co.uk](http://freightstore.co.uk)), a beautiful new household goods shop on Lewes High Street, which is a mother/daughter partnership, creating and sourcing simple, honest and functional products.'

**Go for a meal at...** 'The Needlemakers Café (01273 486258, [needlemakers.co.uk](http://needlemakers.co.uk)), an historic landmark in the heart of Lewes. The gorgeous café, run by Roman and Sarah, has a great old-fashioned feel with bare brick walls, and the food is lovely.'

## Small business advice

### How to find perfect shop premises

What to look out for when choosing a suitable retail store site

*The Closet & Botts shop* was a great find for Chloe and Harriet and ticked many boxes for them. Premises can often be hard to find, so do your research and follow your head, not your heart when making the big decisions...

- **Work out your business needs for your premises in terms of size, location and budget.** Schedule enough time for finding premises and preparing them ready for launch, as it can take longer than you think.

**• Be realistic about how much space you will need.**

- **Check what you are allowed to alter.** Will you encounter planning laws?

**• Remember, location is everything.**

The high street attracts valuable passing trade but it also affects how much you pay, so you might need to realign expectations dependent on budget. For Closet & Botts, Lewes rents were an affordable entry point.

**• Take into account parking and customer access.** These are key factors if loading or unloading is necessary.

**• Consider retail outlets nearby.**

How will they affect your brand image?

**• Don't be fooled by the cheapest option.** If the premises are in a bad location, it could be a false economy.

**• Know the top price you can afford and also allow for other**

**financial aspects in your budget** - rent, rates, business rates, utility bills, staff costs, marketing, and telephone and internet charges.

- **Try to negotiate a monthly rental to help with cash flow.** A lease or a licence are the two main types of legal agreement between a property owner and the occupier.

- **Licence agreements are more flexible than leases,** as they don't tie you into long contracts, are quicker to sort out and normally incur few or no legal fees. They don't give you the same accommodation rights, however, and a landlord could give you notice on the same short-term basis that you could give notice to the landlord.

**• Leases require a longer commitment but offer agreed rents and more security of tenure,** allowing a chance to renew your lease at the end of its term. Beeton Edwards, specialist property lawyer ([beetonedwards.co.uk](http://beetonedwards.co.uk)), advises that if you receive a lease agreement and your agent had previously prepared Heads of Terms with points agreed,

these are not contractually binding.

- **Focus initially on the property being let,** known as the demise or demised premises. It could be a written description or a lease plan.

**• If the term is over seven years, the plan has to be Land Registry compliant,** having a north point and drawn to a scale the Land Registry recognises (1:200 or 1:500).

- **Check break clause options** have no conditions attached, or the landlord can thwart the tenant's ability to terminate the lease early.

**• Check rent and rent review provisions** in schedules at the back of the lease. These are often technical, so seek a surveyor's advice.

- **The term is found after the parties and definitions clause,** where the landlord grants, and the tenant takes, the lease.

**• The tenant's covenant comes next,** covering repair obligations and the tenant's ability to assign or underlet the lease, plus alterations and signage terms.

- **The first schedule** is a description of the premises followed by the rights granted to the tenant and to the landlord.

- **Do seek legal advice before you sign a lease.**

**For further information, go to:** [businesslink.gov.uk](http://businesslink.gov.uk), [business-scene.com](http://business-scene.com), [bytestart.co.uk](http://bytestart.co.uk), [startupdonut.co.uk](http://startupdonut.co.uk), [startups.co.uk](http://startups.co.uk).



FEATURE ALI HEATH PHOTOGRAPHS EMMA LEVINS

“

*The one lesson we've learned...*  
Know your trade before you open a shop.  
The experience we've gained at markets for sourcing,  
pricing and selling has been invaluable”

”

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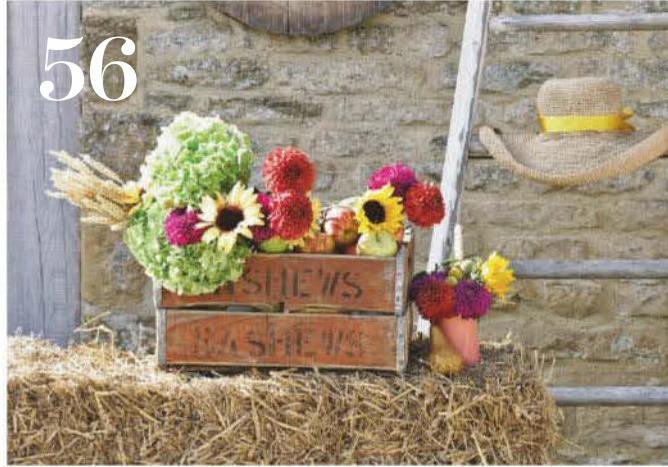
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|-------------------------|-------------------------|
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| Structures              | 144 Heating & Radiators |
| 141 Bathrooms           | 143 Home Accessories    |
| 139 Beam Renovation     | 141 Home Improvements   |
| 144 Beds & Bedding      | 145 Home Interiors      |
| 141 Blinds              | 143 Kitchens            |
| 142 Conservatories      | 140 Lighting            |
| 139 Fabric & Decoration | 144 Restoration &       |
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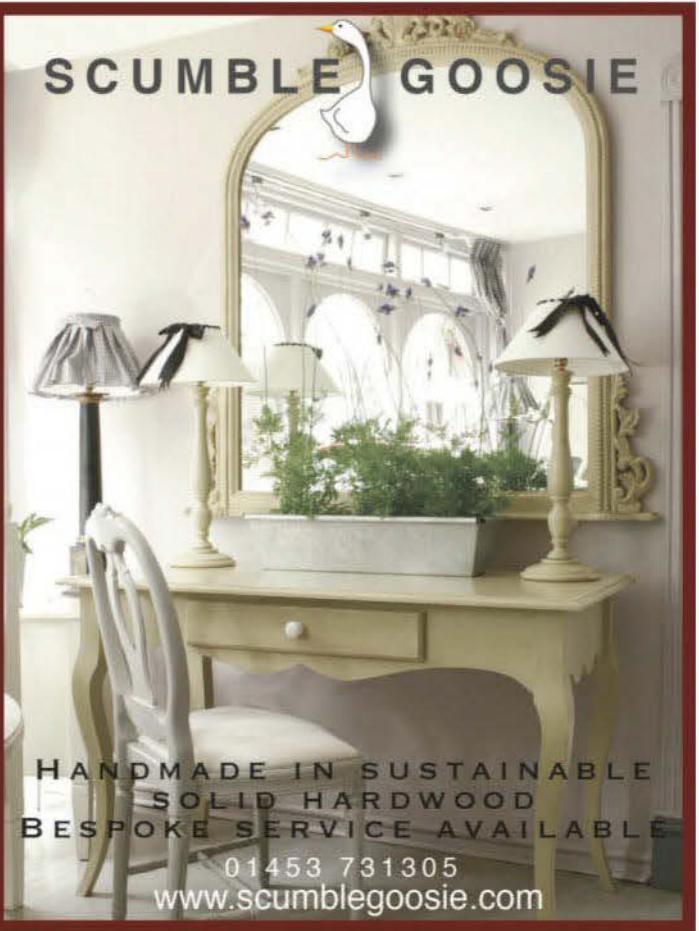
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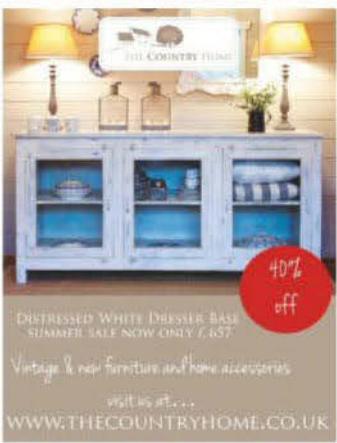
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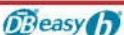


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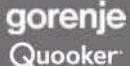
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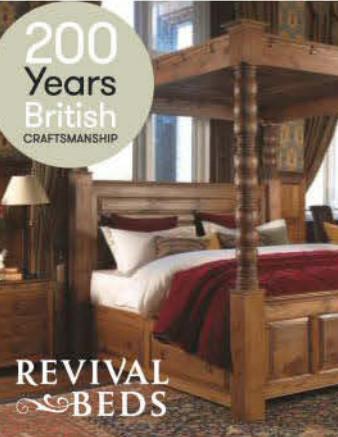
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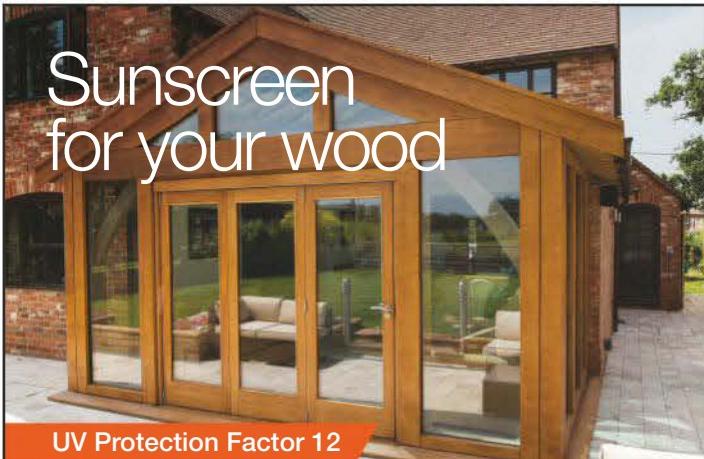
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***There are so many beautiful vistas*** at Sudeley that I'm hard pushed to pick just one. This ancestral home – where I have lived for the past 50 years – is cradled in the Cotswold Hills. Coming over Cleeve Hill, there are traffic jams as people stop to admire the castle. As visitors arrive, they come in through the Tithe Barn Garden and gaze across the koi carp pond towards the castle – a view that hasn't changed in 700 years.

It's a place for quiet contemplation and I walk there every evening with my dog, Tulah. We sit together by the pond, with the castle reflected in the water, enjoying the peace and solitude while watching the koi carp glide by and listening to the birdsong. In summer there are wonderful pink poppies framing the view, together with hollyhocks and cardoons, and the light on the Cotswold stone of the castle is

quite extraordinary. When my grandchildren visit we have a picnic supper in this very spot.

Sudeley is an ancient and very special place, with royal connections stretching back over a thousand years. Henry VIII's sixth and final wife, Catherine Parr, once lived here and is entombed in the beautiful 15th-century church in the grounds. The first time I saw Sudeley was by moonlight in the dead of winter and it is an image that has stayed with me always. I grew up in Virginia in the United States and yet I am the longest residing owner. I am so lucky to have lived in this magical place.

### HOW TO ENJOY THE VIEW

Sudeley Castle & Gardens is situated near Winchcombe in Gloucestershire on the B4632, north east of Cheltenham, or take the A46 from Junction 9 of the M5.

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